

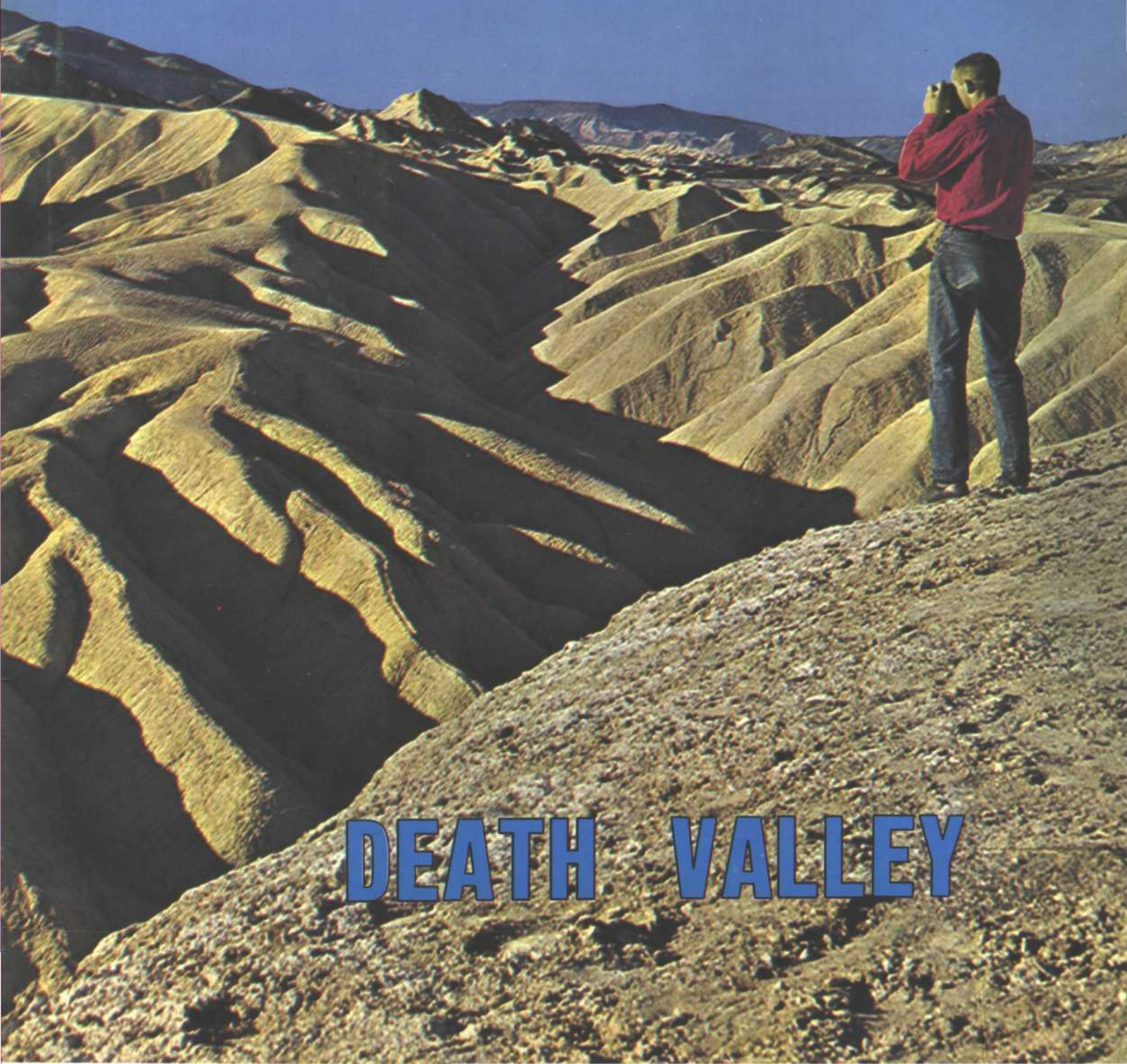
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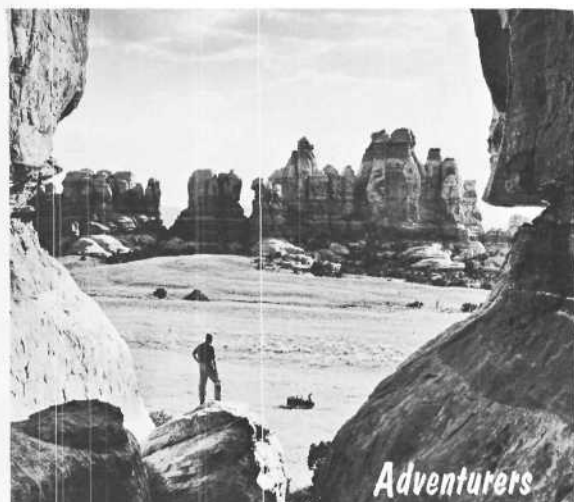
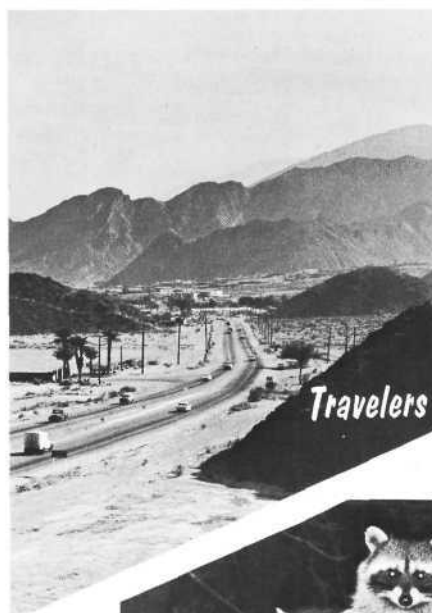
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Desert

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DEATH VALLEY DAYS. Death Valley, the beautiful, spectacular and sometimes deadly basin lying below sea level between California and Nevada, is featured in this issue. During the 1800's untold numbers of prospectors and Easterners seeking gold and a new life in California perished in a vain attempt to cross the burning, summer sands of Death Valley. Today, however, the area is a National Monument with a fascinating new museum, paved roads to scenic areas, hotels and motels, and complete facilities for the thousands of tourists who visit the area during the winter season.

This special issue coincides with the 15th Annual '49er Death Vally Encampment, November 5-8, when more than 10,000 people from all parts of the United States gather to celebrate and participate in the special activities or just renew old acquaintances. In nearby Beatty, Nevada the three days of Nov. 6, 7 and 8 will be jammed packed with events also, including "The World's Championship Wild Burro Race."

NEW DEATH VALLEY WRITERS. During its 27 years, DESERT Magazine has carried hundreds of stories on Death Valley by now celebrated writers such as Randall Henderson, Nell Murbarger, John Hilton, L. Burr Beldon, Ed Ainsworth, Dr. Edmund Jaeger and others. Although these writers continue to contribute to DESERT, they are all presently occupied with writing books, columns, painting or lecturing. As a result, we are introducing some new Death Valley authors who, in the years to come, will no doubt be busy writing books, columns, painting and lecturing. . .

BYGONE BODIE BREATHS. Following ceremonies during which the "Ghost Town of Bodie" was dedicated as a National Historic Site and State Historical Landmark, California State officials said the once-booming gold mine community of the mid 1800's will be kept "in a state of studied neglect." By this they mean that whereas neglected ghost towns eventually fall apart, Bodie's weathered timber and relics will be maintained, but only in so far as they continue to look like a "ghost" town. Located 10 miles off U.S. Highway 395 between Bridgeport and Mono Lake, on the California-Nevada border, the area is well worth visiting.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR. Last day of Gems and Minerals Show at Imperial, California, Nov. 1. Imperial Valley Rodeo and Cattle Call at Brawley, Calif., Nov. 2-8. Death Valley Encampment, Nov. 5-8. Wild Burrow Race at Beatty, Nevada, Nov. 6-8, with special events on the 6th. Salton City 500 Mile Boat Race, Salton Sea, Calif., Nov. 6-8. Fiesta de la Cuadrill, Balboa Park, San Diego, Nov. 6-8. Phoenix Don's Club Trek to Canyon de Chelly and Zuni Villages. Nov. 6-8. Swiss Boys Wrestling, Holtville, Calif., Nov. 7-8. Mission San Antonio de Pala Fiesta, Pala, Calif. Nov. 7-8. Montebello Annual Gem and Mineral Show at National Guard Armory, Montebello, Calif., Nov. 7-8. Twentynine Palms Annual Gem and Mineral Show, Hayes Auditorium, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Nov. 14-15. Dune Buggy Show at Brawley, Nov. 29. Imperial Valley Kennel Club Dog Show, Imperial, Nov. 29.

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New Books For Desert Readers

DESERT BONANZA

By Marcia Rittenhouse Wynn

This new, enlarged edition of one of the desert's best selling books includes double its former number of photos and a new folding map with inset of an old detail map of Mojave mines.

Little has been written of the great Mojave Desert. The author grew up in the Randsburg boom period, which she faithfully records, but her lively narrative extends back to the beginning of Death Valley history as well.

One colorful incident she recalls is the day a nude woman came to call on her mother. It seems that the caller, who lived with a saloon owner, grew lonely for feminine companionship, and having noted the author's mother going about her business in Randsburg, decided this was just the sort of friend she'd like to have. To give herself courage before making the formal call, she imbibed a jolt in excess and enthusiastically skipped off without her clothes. But she did remember to protect her hair with a scarf!

Humorous occurrences and the fantastic characters who participated in them contribute greatly to the early history of Randsburg and Johannesburg. Mrs. Wynn has remembered them all.

Published by the Arthur H. Clark Company, this hardcover book consists of 275 pages and may be ordered from the DESERT Magazine Book Order Department for \$8.75, including postage.

A RANGE GUIDE TO MINES AND MINERALS

By Jay Ellis Ransom

Some of the best prospecting, the author claims, is in abandoned mining districts where valuable mineral ores are present and man is absent. These he enumerates, from the largest to the smallest, in addition to specifically locating them as to state, county, township and geologic range. All U.S. states are covered.

For easy identification, the book provides a listing of 400 mineral species with comprehensive descriptions. Directions are given on assembly, care, preservation and cleaning of mineral collections, as well as proper tools and equipment for field work.

Then, once you've found your nuggets, the author proceeds to tell you how to stake a claim, examine your ore deposit, and how to develop pits and shafts and stockpile your ore.

This is a valuable book for weekend and hobby prospectors. It includes information in regard to researching old mines, acquiring geological mining reports and maps, and even covers SCUBA diving for underwater gold and mineral hunting with a black light.

Published by Harper and Row, it is hardcover with 305 pages and good illustrations. May be ordered from DESERT Magazine Book Order Department for \$6.25, including postage.

THE LONG WALK

By L. R. Bailey

Although brief accounts of the Navajo Wars have been written, for the first time we have a full account of the complicated factors that led to the tragic attempt to end the Navajo depredations and slave raids against the Pueblo Indians and white men of New Mexico and Arizona.

Only one chapter of *The Long Walk* is devoted to the actual enforced emigration of the Navajo from the lands they had made their own in northern Arizona and New Mexico to the flat alkaline-impregnated lands of the Bosque Redondo. The earlier chapters of background material are very necessary to an understanding of this forced exodus, still referred to by the Navajo as the "long walk." What an epic account of bureaucratic bungling the whole story is!

As a result of painstaking research, young Bailey is able to narrate in excellent detail the hopeless and pathetic plight of the Navajo at Bosque Redondo and Brigadier-General James H. Carleton's well-meaning and tenacious attempts to settle the seminomadic Navajo into a grandiose, pueblo-like community to which he was totally unsuited. Even more hopeless were the superhuman struggles of the Navajo, through forced labor, to grow corn, wheat, and other food plants in a soil and a climate unsuited to that type of agriculture.

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A Christmas Kindness—Greeting is a beautiful 4 line western verse



Howdy... from the two of us!

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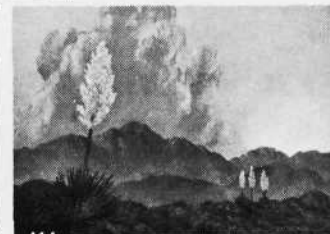
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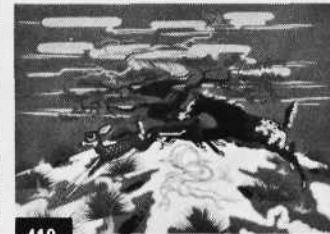
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"...fair and open face of heaven..."—May every happiness be yours at Christmas and throughout the New Year



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Winter Friends—A friendly wish for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



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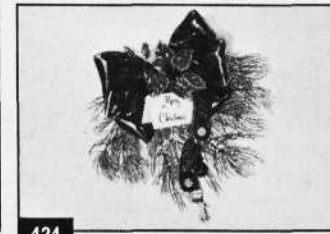
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Christmas Visitors—May the meaning of the Season be deeper, its friendships stronger and its hopes brighter, etc.



422

Greetings from our outfit to yours—With Best Wishes for Christmas and all the New Year



424

Spurs an' Pine—Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



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"Donde no hay voluntad no hay fuerza."

Where there is no will, there is no strength.

"Es mejor ser cabeza de raton, que cola de leon."

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THREE PATHS ALONG A RIVER By Tom Hudson. Illustrated by Ralph Love. Once a river, the San Luis Rey is now only an intermittent stream. History marched beside the river, and in a sense the Valley of San Luis Rey can called the Gateway to California. The earliest overland travelers coming from Mexico and west from the States traveled the Carrizo Corridor leading inland through Temecula to the Mission of San Gabriel and the Pueblo of Los Angeles. The Butterfield Stage route crossed the river near its headwaters. 245 page. Hard cover. \$6.

GHOSTS OF THE ADOBE WALLS by Nell Murbarger, the well known "roving reporter of the desert." The author's just-published book is an intimate chronicle of Arizona's once-booming mining towns, stage stations, army posts, marauding Indians and fantastic human characters. 380 pages, illustrated. Hard Cover. \$7.50.

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THE GRUESOME ENCORE

by Myrtle Myles

SKIDOO CAME to life because of a fog. When Harry Ramsey and a man called One-eye Thompson lost their way on a road leading to the new boom camp of Harrisburg, they stopped to rest against an outcropping of rock. When the fog lifted, the rock turned out to be gold.

This was back in 1905. In deciding upon a name for the town that sprung up, a numerologist associated a popular expression of the day, 23-Skidoo,

with the fact that a Rhyolite man named Bob Montgomery had successfully piped water from Telescope Peak 23 miles away and suggested the name Skidoo. So it became.

Oldtimers say the camp produced over a million dollars worth of gold ore between its discovery and its demise some 20 years later. Skidoo's chief claim to fame, however, was not its riches. Rather, it was an infamous lynching of a scoundrel named Joe Simpson in 1908.

On a tour to the ghost town of Skidoo in 1962, we were privileged to

be accompanied by an 87-year-old gentleman named George Cook. The interesting thing about Mr. Cook was that it was he who pulled on the rope at the lynching. His participation had only recently been divulged to a few intimate friends—after all others involved had passed on to their rewards, or whatever.

"Joe Simson," Mr. Cook told us, "was a would-be villain who had killed a man at Keeler after shooting-up Jack Gun's Saloon in Independence the preceding year. He'd somehow gotten off and drifted to Skidoo where he became a partner with Fred Oakes in the Gold Seal Saloon. Across the street was Jim Arnold's Skidoo Trading Company.

"Arnold was a friendly, well-liked man and had always been on good terms with Simpson, but Simpson be-



*The Mill at Skidoo
Photo by Gary Moore*

came drunk and abusive one April morning and decided to hold up a bank situated in part of Arnold's Skidoo Trading Company. Apprehended, his gun was taken away and hidden by the deputy sheriff, but a little later Simpson found his weapon and returned to the store to shoot Jim Arnold. He then turned on two other men who had come to the rescue, but his aim was poor and both escaped. Eventually Simpson was overpowered and placed under guard in the deputy sheriff's cabin. Unfortunately," Mr. Cook lamented, "the popular Jim Arnold died that night."

Skidoo went wild with indignation. After Arnold's funeral, which the entire camp attended, a group went to the improvised jail, led the prisoner out at the end of a rope and hanged him to the nearest telephone pole. When Sheriff Nailor from Independence arrived, after a hazardous trip over rough roads via Tonopah and Rhyolite, he made the now famous statement, "It's the best thing that ever happened to Inyo County; it saved us \$25,000!"

But this wasn't the end. Several spectators had forgotten their cameras and wanted pictures of the hanging. So, Joe Simpson's body was obligingly strung up again, this time from the ridgepole of the tent where he was "laid out." News of this gruesome encore spread and the lynching won everlasting fame.

In his private narrative of the event, George Cook added a factor never before related: "Joe was dead before we got the rope around his neck; he died of a heart attack (from fright) and was already gone when dragged to the telephone pole scaffold."

It was also he, George Cook confessed, who assisted Dr. Macdonald in removing the head from Simpson's corpse. The doctor, it seems, had once performed an operation on Simpson's nose and wanted to make a further medical study of the case. Going at night, they performed the severance at the lonely prospect hole where Simpson's body had been tossed. (No one in Skidoo would give him a decent burial, so great was the indignation at his senseless crime). The skull was exhibited for a period in a showcase at Wildrose, but later disappeared.

The remainder of the skeleton resisted oblivion, however. Years later when George Cook returned to Skidoo to work in the mill, an agitated prospector appeared one day to report a headless skeleton of a man who'd evi-

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dentally been murdered. Because Cook was the only oldtimer around at the time, he was consulted. Indeed a crime had been committed sometime, he agreed, but of the details he had conveniently forgotten.

Last year George Cook passed away. Small in stature, religious, mild-tempered and giving to writing sentimental verse, he was the antithesis of our Western idea of a vigilante. The role forced upon him by his acute anger over the murder of a friend bothered this good man to the end of his days. His belief that Simpson did not expire at his hand appeared to be a real comfort. And, perhaps he was right. We cannot disagree, for George Cook was there.

Much interesting history is connected with the now defunct Skidoo. Following its early boom, the town was deserted for a period, then, under new management, the mine and mill reopened during the 1930s and a period of production occurred. The old wild days never returned, however, and its fame as a mining camp still rests upon the lynching incident—to which we add, "Joe Simpson did not die because of a rope and a telephone pole. He died of a heart attack!"

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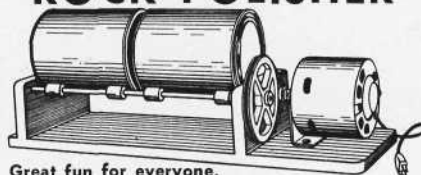
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The Rise and Fall of a man named Smith

by Harry Barber

THE AMBITION of every miner is to find and develop a mine. Francis Marion Smith was no exception. Having acquired the prospecting mania early in life, the Fall of 1872, found him in the wood camps about 10 miles from Columbus, Nevada. Like thousands of others, he had been engaged in teaming—contracting for the delivery of wood to the mills and timber to the mines. His worldly goods consisted of several wood ranches, a band of pack animals and the usual variety of wildcat claims.

His lucky star twinkled the day a terrific earthquake shook Teel's Marsh. From his cabin in the timber lands, Smith could see the Columbus marsh, even then a modest producer of ulexite, and Teel's Marsh, glistening like beds of snow in the desert. Accompanied by two of his woodchoppers, he set out to examine cracks left in Teel's Marsh by the quake. Testing proved them to be solid deposits of borax. So impressed was Smith that he sent one of his men to Columbus to have a sample assayed while he remained to move provisions and pack animals from his wood camp to the new location on the dry desert lake.

Borax was then worth 30c a pound by the carload and 25c an ounce

retail. The value of the deposit attracted squatters, but after appealing to courts, clearing up adverse claims and buying out over 100 locators, Smith finally had his location secured.

Uniting with his brother, he organized a Chicago firm, erected a small plant and went into production, hauling the borax by mule teams to the nearest railroad. As soon as the profits accumulated, he built a railroad to connect his plant with outside transportation.

Borax Smith, as he was known, purchased all of the existing claims filed by William T. Coleman, a prominent California businessman, on the richest field of borax yet discovered—hundreds of glistening, isolated acres in formidable Death Valley. With a growing demand for borax and an apparently unlimited reserve of crude ore, a quick, sure way had to be found to move the product out of Death Valley and across 165 barren miles of California desert to the nearest railroad junction at Mojave.

Wagons pulled by multiple mule teams were not unknown, but until J. W. S. Perry, the local superintendent, and a young muleskinner named Ed Stiles set to work on the problem, a 12-mule team was the maximum. It was Perry and Stiles who thought of hitching two mule teams together to form a 100-foot long, 20-mule team. Perry designed wagons massive and sturdy enough to carry the borax and withstand the rugged journey; Perry,

too, laid out the route for the mule teams.

The wagons were built in Mojave for \$900, had rear wheels 7 feet high and front wheels 5 feet high, each with steel tires 8 inches wide and one inch thick. The hubs were 18 inches in diameter and 22 inches in length.



The spokes, of split oak, measured 5½ inches wide at the hub. The axle-trees were made of solid steel bars, 3½ inches square. The wagon beds were 16 feet long, 4 feet wide and 6 feet deep. Empty, each wagon weighed 7,800 pounds. Loaded with borax, it weighed 31,800 pounds. Two such loaded wagons, plus the water tank (which held 1,200 gallons and weighed 9,600 pounds) made a total of 73,200 pounds or 36½ tons.



From 1883 to 1889, the 20-mule teams hauled borax out of Death Valley, over the steep Panamint Mountains and across the desert to the railroad. Despite the heat—temperatures often rose to 130 degrees—the teams pulled their heavy loads along the rough trails, traveling 15 to 18 miles a day. It was a 20-day round trip. Springs of water were far apart and each journey was but a repetition of hardship and adventure. Tragic tales are told of fights between teamsters and tramps of the road; of heat prostration and insanity from thirst. During the six years they were in constant use, the 20-mule teams carried 20 million pounds of borax out of the valley—a considerable tribute to the ingenuity of the designers and to the stamina of the teamsters, swamper and animals.

The 20-mule teams — the dramatic solution of a transportation problem—soon became a world famous symbol. Through hard work and a lively imagination, Borax Smith made his 20-Mule Team Borax a household staple. One of his first advertising booklets recommended a

number of uses—for digestion, keeping milk fresh; as a complexion aid (Don't wash your face in ordinary lake water); for removing dandruff; and for bathing (use half a pound of powdered borax to the ordinary family bath of 12 gallons of water). Borax was also "excellent for washing carriages" and useful, it said, "in curing epilepsy and bunions."

To expand his borax business, Smith looked abroad for new markets and in 1896 amalgamated with a British chemical firm to form Borax Consolidated, Limited. Formation of the new company satisfied Smith's need for new outlets.

The company continued to develop the colemanite properties in the Calico Mountains where a calcining plant and a railroad—the Borate & Daggett RR—were built, to make borax and carry it down the mainline of the Santa Fe. Smith next turned back to the colemanite deposits in the Funeral Mountains near Death Valley. Here he built another calcining plant and two more railroads—the narrow gauge Death Valley R.R. and the standard gauge Tonopah & Tidewater R. R. The D.V.R.R. carried ore from the mines to the calciner at Death Valley Junction; from there the T & T took the borax to the mainline of the Santa Fe at Ludlow.

In 1910 Smith settled in Oakland, California. There, investing his profits in public utilities, he brought about a merger of all street car lines in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, which with the addition of the ferry system from Oakland to San Francisco, became the key route system. He also opened up large tracts of land for residential and industrial uses in East Bay cities. Smith took an active interest in sports and was a devotee of yachting. In 1906 he won the cup offered by King Edward VII in the national race off Newport, R.I.

In these new activities, he soon met financial disaster. With heavy borrowing on short term notes and extended litigations his \$20 million fortune dwindled into bankruptcy. Between 1921 and 1925 he strove to recoup through the acquisition of a newly discovered deposit of colemanite in Clark County, Nevada. Borax Smith was believed to be on the way to new wealth at the time of his death in Oakland on August 27, 1931.

Today borates are used in hundreds of industrial applications ranging from nuclear shields to soaps and cosmetics. Borax has come a long way since a man named Smith wondered what was in a crack made by a quake.

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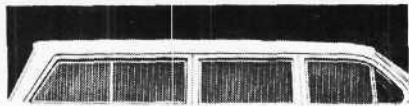
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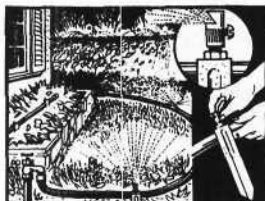
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Singing Sands

by
Daniel L. REARDON

A STILL UNSOLVED mystery of nature is the phenomenon of "singing" sands, "musical" sands, "humming" sands, and "barking" sands.

Marco Polo, in the 13th century, encountered them in the Great Gobi Desert, but, not knowing the strange instrumental sounds he heard were caused by sand, believed the desert to be inhabited by spirits.

According to another traveler who studied singing sands in the Arabian Desert, the phenomenon appeared to be of frequent occurrence, the music varying from the "high-pitched twanging of harp strings to the rumble of distant drums."

Singing sands are also found among the dunes along the southern shore of Lake Michigan.

In Churchill County, Nevada, about 28 miles east of Fallon, there is a long shifting sand dune known as Singing Mountain which occasionally hums like telegraph wires. Musical sand dunes in southern California gave rise to a legend that a monastery lies buried under the sand.

Naturally, near the Great Sahara Desert, we would expect to find the strange occurrence. In the western Sahara between Timbuktu (Tombouctou) in Mali and Morocco they have been found as well as in the region west of the Nile. In South Africa, singing hills have been observed west of the Langberg Mountain, near Griquatown. And down in South America, in Chile, there is the Rumbling Mountain, to which the Indians give a wide berth.

Most famous of singing sands is the Hill of the Bell, or Jebel Nakus, in the Sinai Peninsula between Egypt

and Palestine. When the sand is in motion the sound commences with a weird, indescribable effect which swells to a roar, then gradually rolls away like the moaning of a far-off bell.

The barking sands of the Hawaiian Islands (Barking Sands) are between Makaha Point and Nohili Point on the isle of Kauai. When clapped and rubbed together between the hands, they produce a sound like a barking dog. The dunes here are of white coral sand with particles of shells and lava.

Why certain sands emit such spooky noises has yet to be completely investigated. Exhaustive studies have been made without definitive results. According to one scientist, sand sings only when the grains are of a certain size, uniformity, and shape. Another theory holds that dry sand under the influence of heat and friction has resonance. Still another postulates electrical influence.

Where the singing sands are near salt water, the "Salt Water" school believes that the sound is due to a thin layer of salt coating the grains which rasps when the sands are disturbed by persons walking or by the wind.

The best explanation ascribes the rare nature music to the moisture content of the sand. If the sand is too wet or too dry, no concert. But if the capillarity (attraction of moisture and sand) is just right so that the grains of sand will rub against each other when agitated, ah, then you have Nature's Philharmonic, conducted by Maestro Wind!

But perhaps it is all just sympathetic vibration—Nature's response to "the Beatles." ///

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The Lazy Reptile of Darwin

by Peter Odens

STORIES OF GOLDEN bullets, of a murder for \$8 and a lazy rattlesnake—these were the tales we carried away with us one morning after a visit to Darwin, California, population 15.

The story of this once booming mining camp and the man after whom it was named goes back more than 100 years. Even while the first gold rush was in full swing, rumors of fabulous wealth began to be heard. Among those legendary mines were the Lost Gunsight Mine. When a group known as the Jayhawkers crossed Death Valley in 1849 in their search for gold, a man named Towne stumbled on the trail. His gunsight was knocked off and he began to look for it. Instead, he found a piece of fabulously rich silver ore.

Overtaking his companions, he tried to persuade them to return to the spot where he had found the rock, but instead they hastened ahead. They had had their difficulties—had lost two men, destroyed their wagons and on the weary trek across the burning sands, had resorted to their skinny oxen for food. No, the Jayhawkers were in no mood to listen to Towne's rambling about a fabulously rich mine. Later on, Towne tried to find

the ore-bearing rock again, but in vain.

This was one of the stories Dr. Darwin French, a popular physician of Oroville, California had been told. One day in March, 1860, he locked up his office, gathered a group of friends and set out to find the Lost Gunsight Mine. For days, weeks and months the group traveled across the Panamint Range and into Death Valley looking for the skeletons of Fish and Isham, the two Jayhawkers who had died on the trail, in order to retrace their route. But they found no Lost Gunsight Mine and returned home disappointed.

Then, within a short time, a story of golden bullets used by an Indian tribe was heard in the mining camps of California. The indomitable doctor set out to check the report. With eight companions he criss-crossed the Mohave desert, exposing himself to Indians in the vain hope that they might shoot at him with golden bullets, but no Indian showed up near the Darwin French group. After staking a claim to an antimony mine above Wildrose, Dr. French and his party returned home. Nevertheless, in 1874 when mines were found in the area

in which he had traveled, his first name was given to the town which sprang up on the southern slopes of the Argus range, as well as to a canyon, a waterfall and a spring.

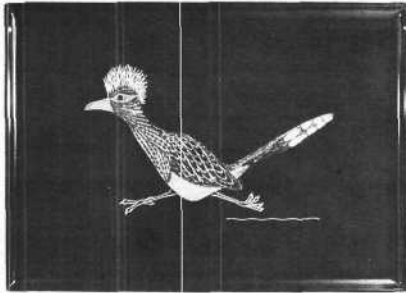
Hundreds of men worked in the mines and mills of Darwin, which boasted of a weekly newspaper and a fine school. It was a lawless, violent camp. Over 100 men and women buried in its cemetery died with their boots on.

Today, the town is all but deserted. Situated some six miles off State Route 190 which leads from the Panamints into Owens Valley, the road is graded and easy to travel. The old post office, long abandoned, still stands and across the street from it is the first school house of Darwin, a popular subject for ghost town artists.

Looking for someone who could tell us about the town, we knocked on the door of a charming cabin and met its owners, Mr. and Mrs. Black, who came to the area in 1906 driving a mule-drawn wagon. We were hospitably received by the retired couple and Fox Black offered to take us to the old cemetery.

"But we can't go in your car," he said. "Too low, you know. We'll take

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my pickup. Otherwise we won't get across the wash."

The old pickup chugged down the dusty street and manfully tackled a deep wash between high caliche walls. Black stopped the truck in the center of the wash and we got out.

"See these caves?" He pointed to dark holes in the caliche walls. "Dug-outs they are, really, dug by miners who lived here when the town was afire." There were door frames around the entrances and, inside, old tables and iron bed frames. Warm in winter and cool in summer, they looked surprisingly comfortable.

Back we climbed into the pickup. Black turned the starter switch and away we rumbled, across the wash and on to the old cemetery. This was divided into three parts, a Chinese section to accommodate the corpses of the large Chinese population who worked in the mine; a second section containing the graves of military men stationed in the area; and a third for the civil population. There we saw a large marker erected "To the memory of Nancy Williams, died September 13, 1877, aged 45 years." A story of a murder is connected with this.

Miss Williams, a hotel keeper, was

slain by two young men whom she befriended. The men believed she had a large amount of gold stowed away, but all they found was about \$8.

Also in the cemetery we found the grave of Jack Stuart, a prospector known for his wit. Many a story is told about Jack, but Black's favorite concerns the time Stuart explained to a city slicker about the heat in Darwin.

"It really isn't too hot there, is it?" that young worthy asked.

"Well," Stuart said, scratching his head, "you're wrong there. Sun beats down on you in Darwin—makes you mighty lazy. Yes, sir, mighty lazy. Why



A Murder Victim of Darwin

only the other day I was walking along a trail to the Coso mountains and came upon a big diamond back. know what that is, young man?"

The city slicker nodded. "Of course I do. A rattler, right? But what happened?"

"Well now, I wasn't afraid of the rattler. Because, you see the heat made the rattler so lazy I just knew he wouldn't attack me. He was so lazy that..."

"Yes?" the young man urged.

"that he he hired a little rattler to shake his rattles for him. That's how lazy he was!" Triumphantly, Jack Stuart ambled away, leaving the young dude with his mouth agape.

We felt a bit like the dude as we heard the story, but we were still chuckling when we said good-bye to Fox Black and his wife and drove away from the yesterday-streets of Darwin.

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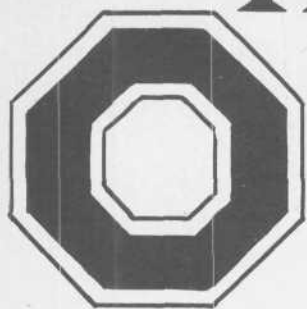
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THE CASE OF THE OCTAGONAL COINS

By DOROTHY ROBERTSON

THERE WILL always be incurable romantics seeking lost treasure. And why not? Didn't Wayne Winters of Tucson, Arizona stumble upon the Jesuit's fabulously rich Planchas de la Plata silver mine while hunting javelina?

In our own neighborhood—the Panamints—a story has been quietly circulating about a lost cache of octagonal gold pieces. Minted in 1851 and 1852, these gold pieces are reputedly worth ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS EACH! But the story was hard to pin down. I have never seen it in print, yet some of our most solid citizens are prowling the Panamint country looking for clues.

I first heard the story from Dan Thomas on the NOTS Base at China Lake. Dr. James Hemry, well-known Ridgecrest chiropractor, was my next lead. Dr. Hemry is an ardent Sunday

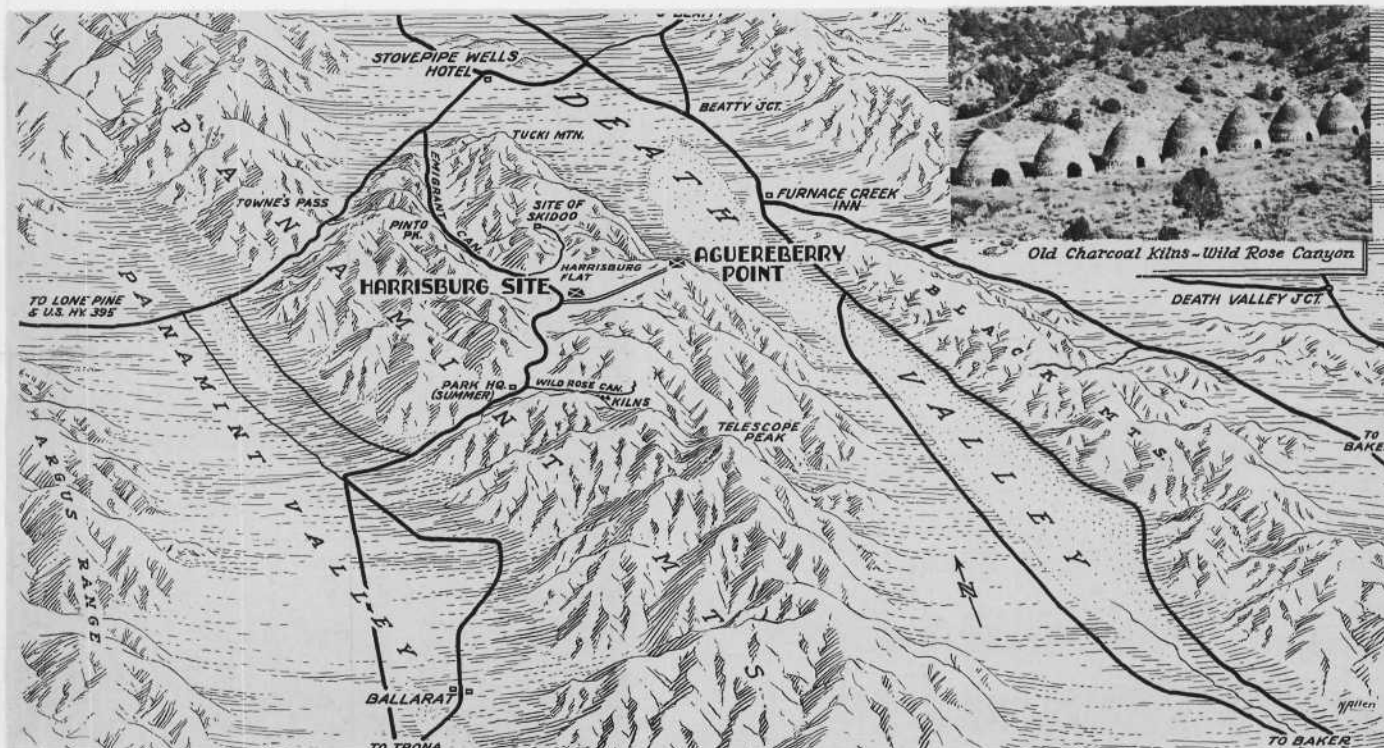
prospector and although he didn't find the lost gold pieces, he did locate a rich deposit worked by an old miner whom he grubstaked for a percentage of the property. When I talked to Dr. Hemry, he substantiated Dan's story about the coins. Another link came from Burdette Fox, son of Indian Wells Valley pioneer, Joe Fox. Burdette had known the original source of the story, a Mexican named Toski, and his version was essentially the same as Dan's and Dr. Hemry's.

Substantially, the story is as follows: In the late 1860s a Mexican wagontrain through Death Valley was ambushed by renegade Indians. All adults in the train were massacred, but a boy and his young sister were taken captive to the renegade's secret camp somewhere in the Panamint Mountains. Fear of discovery caused the Indians to throw gold pieces plundered from the wagons down a deep fissure in an enormous rock. This,

the boy Toski witnessed. Years later, during the rush of prospectors into the area, the children overheard the Indians planning to kill them because they feared the children might remember too much, talk to the white men, and incur revenge. The boy took his sister and fled to the distant Tehachapi Mountains. After reaching manhood, Toski was never able to remember which of the many canyons in the 49-mile-long Panamints held his family's fortune.

After finally tying down this story, we were elated when George Sutherland of China Lake invited us to join a 4-wheel drive caravan to Tucki Mountain. As we rolled through Trona, the potash town on the shores of dry Searles Lake, I remembered Burdette telling me that he had worked with the old Mexican, Toski, right here in 1941.

Midway through Panamint Valley we came to a small sign pointing east



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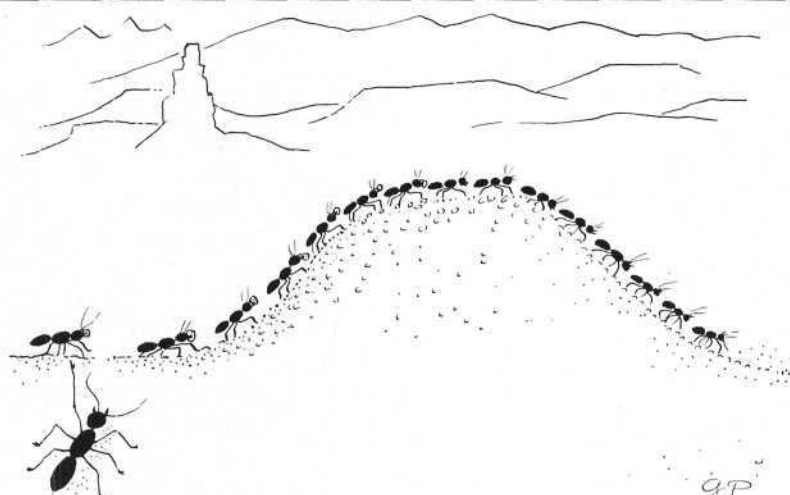
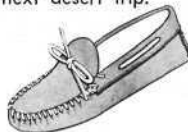
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across the dry lake bed to Ballarat. Spread out on an alluvial fan below the high mountains, the old supply camp for the silver boom towns of over half a century ago had all but melted into the sand, although a few of its adobe houses are still presided over by Seldom Seen Slim. In early days the road to Ballarat teemed with stage, freight wagon, foot and burro traffic.

North of Ballarat, Hall Canyon is a rock-smudged defile. Indian George (one of the original old Indians of the area) once lived at the mouth of this canyon at Indian Ranch, now part of the Indian Reservation. Hall Canyon is of great interest to the octagonal coin seekers because here there is a huge rock with a large fissure. It was also an ideal place for an Indian camp, with springs, mesquite trees, grass, and at higher elevations, pinon pines — the nuts of which were important to Indians for both food and barter.

The Panamint entrance to Death Valley winds on up Wildrose Canyon, once called Windy Canyon by old burro-men, but later named Rose Springs by Dr. S. A. George of the Darwin French exploratory party of 1860 because of its profusion of wild roses. Wildrose Station, rebuilt now, was the halfway stage-stop in the roaring days of old Skidoo. Today it is a modern service station and tourist camp with an interesting cache of old photographs.

A few miles beyond the highway turn, fascinating country opens up. Wildrose's historic charcoal kilns which once supplied charcoal for Hearst's Modoc Mine across Panamint Valley march along the north side of the road. A highway sign on the saddle of Emigrant Pass points to Skidoo, the site of Harrisburg and Aguerreberry Camp, and Boothill Cemetery. Emigrant Canyon is an historic one, with Indian petroglyphs pecked into its red sandstone eastern wall. The Park Service has piped spring water from Emigrant Springs for the modern traveler's convenience, but the springs were once convenient for Indians too—another clue? It has been recorded how Panamint Tom, almost a century ago, would watch incoming white strangers from a hidden vantage point that many believe was located somewhere in Emigrant Canyon.

Stopping for a drink at the springs, George Sutherlen briefed us on an approaching stretch of bad trail where we were to turn east towards Tucki Mountain, just two miles or so down the canyon. The trail turned out to be a humdinger which wound errati-



A bighorn sheep leaped ahead of us.

Photo by Tom Murray

cally up and down bouldered washes and over crumbling boulders where our vehicles canted at an alarming degree. This is a trail to be taken only by experienced boondockers in high-centered vehicles. The narrow-canyoned country now opened its rockstrewn flats with ragged cliffs that seemed to lean over our heads. Caves pocked the rocky ridges and stream-beds were deeply grooved through the rocky mass. Bunch grass and red-stemmed filaree rustled with Whispering Bells and Pepper-grass; blue, lavender and purple desert heliotrope contrasted with Dalea, brilliant yellow Panamint daisies and sweet evening primrose.

Suddenly the lead Jeep stopped. A herd of mountain sheep bounded out of view. My eyes assessed the possi-

bilities of this Tucki heartland (Tucki means sheep in Indian) as perhaps the secret camp. It was certainly not accessible, it furnished game for food and, from the shoulder of the mountain just under Tucki's peak, it opened onto an unobstructed view of the entire Death Valley!

We parked our vehicles by the Tucki Gold Mine and scattered to explore. The Tucki Gold Mine was operated from the early 1900's until 1938. Water had been piped all the way from springs on the west side of Tucki, for the gold-bearing material was cyanided right on the premises. This I could understand, for that gouged trail up which we had climbed would have been a terrific hazard for ore wagons.

We crowded close to the pock-marked ridges.

My husband, Allan, and I separated in order to cover more territory in the short time we had. I heard someone shout that he'd found a purple bottle, but we had more pressing business on Tucki. We hoped to find the golden coins!

There were so many fissures—the whole region was one huge rockpile—that we hardly knew where to start. As Allan disappeared around a high ridge, I started down Tucki Wash to see if an Indian could reach Death Valley from this side. He could. Steep, almost sheer in places, it provided perfect access and exit points for marauding Indians, in addition to an excellent vantage point for spotting pioneers' wagons. Far below alkali flats shimmered under a glaring sun and charcoal ribbons of highway tied together the distant civilizations of Furnace Creek Ranch, Park Headquarters, Furnace Creek Hotel and Stovepipe Wells—outposts that make today's Death Valley less deadly.

Allan came down the rise to join me. "There isn't time to explore properly," he said "We'll have to come back when we have a few days."

And that's the way it always is with octagonal coin hunters. We keep coming back to play the game of seek and find—and what we find, even when nothing tangible, is more valuable than the golden coins we seek!

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THE CATACOMBS OF CALICO

BY ROYCE ROLLINS

WHEN I WAS a child there was a sign beside an offshoot of the Las Vegas - Los Angeles Highway that read "Calico." None of our family knew what or where Calico was, but my childish mind associated it with calico cats, calico tea, and my own calico quilt back home.

This stretch of terrain has enchanted me ever since. On subsequent trips I watched the old sign weather away and years later I saw it replaced with a fresh one announcing Walter Knott's restoration of the ghost town.

Today the town stands in better condition than during its ghoulish occupancy. A general store, saloon,

hotel, school house and other buildings line the streets. Autos are prohibited, but transportation is provided by a cable tram and the reactivated Calico-Odessa Railroad. The famous Maggie Mine is open and visitors may explore some of the 35 miles of tunnels that brought forth as much silver as any single mine in Western history.

During a recent conversation with Calico manager Henry Fitzpatrick, we learned of a jeep trip inaugurated by prospector Cliff Zarley. Mr. Zarley owns an onyx mine and for \$5 per person will transport you to the site where you may collect as much as 30 pounds of prize onyx. Tickets are sold at the Calico Leather shop, and, except for Mondays and Tuesdays, trips leave every two hours from the first of October to June.

It is difficult to restore a ghost town and avoid commercialism. Calico is no exception. But the country around it remains untouched. It was our exploration of Mule, Phillips, and Odessa Canyons in the Calico Mountains that for us resurrected the excitement of the past.

Named for brilliant patches of red, green, blue and gold, the Calico hills gave birth to a silver rush in the '80s when a general store operator on the Mojave River chased an Indian horse thief into their midst and noted likely signs of ore. Darkness called off the pursuit, but months later Lafayette Mechem recalled the incident and his memory sparked the discovery of silver.

The most celebrated and beautiful of the Calico canyons, Odessa, may be entered a short distance north of

Desert prospector left jar of grease and fire set up for camp's next occupant.



The Calicos are honeycombed with mines. Inside the dark tunnels it's spooky—and dangerous!

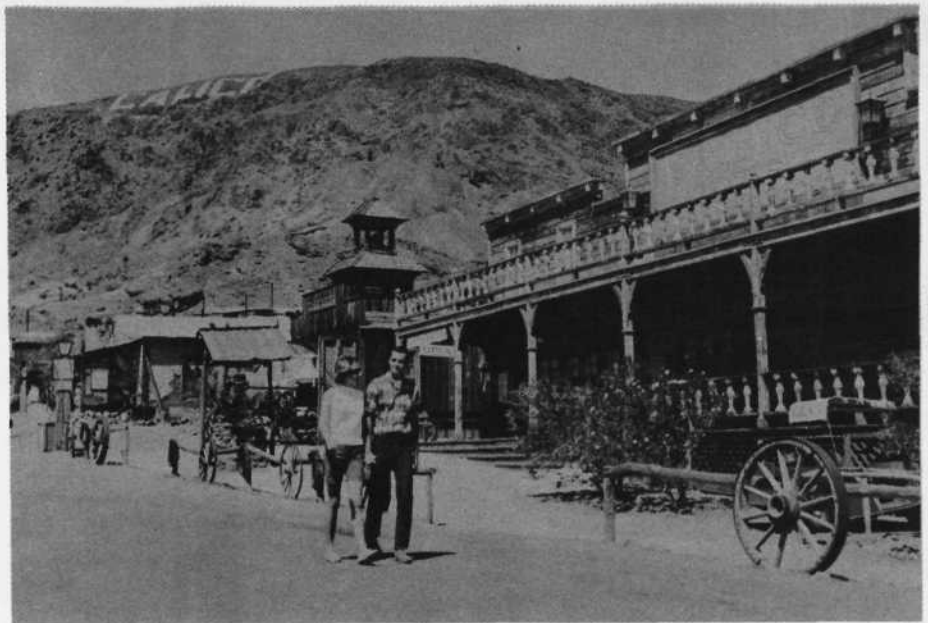


Desert's

trip of the
month

the entrance to the town of Calico. The sign post to it reads Doran Road. Near the mouth of the canyon there is a road-closed sign. It's advisable to leave your car here. A short hike will reveal why.

Originally a mere crack in the canyon's lava walls, water eroded an opening that revealed a wealth of silver tucked into the mountains beyond. Excited miners blasted a wider passage so twisted and narrow that in certain spots its sides almost touch above your head. But clearance isn't the greatest danger. High on the canyon walls hangs the great Odessa Mine that made millionaires of a gentleman named John Daggett, who wound up as a Lt. Governor of California, and his partner W. S. Stow. This mountain is almost entirely gutted and what used to be inside of it



The restoration of Calico is the finest of any ghost town in the West.

is now outside—thousands of tons of gravel held aloft by a wooden retaining wall. In places the wood has rotted and fallen away and slides of gravel form thick layers between the canyon walls. At any moment the slightest tremble of the earth, or even the crackle of a jet smashing the sound barrier, could loosen the avalanche and send it pounding into the tight canyon road. There would be no time for escape.

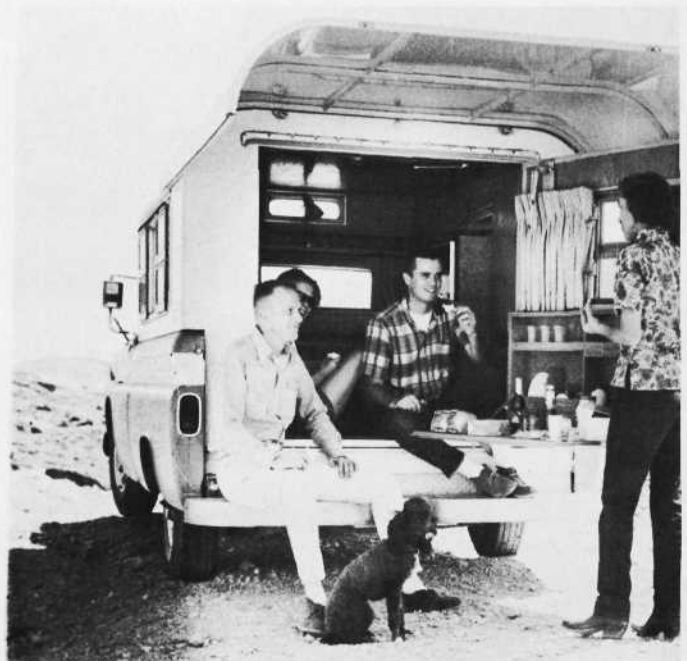
Safer, and actually more fun to explore, is Mule Canyon and Phillips Drive. The mouth of this canyon is located in a dry lake called Mohavia

by geologists because some of the most typical aspects of the ancient land mass are found near its center. Three-toed horses and prehistoric camel roamed its verdant plains, until ancient upheavals changed the lay of the land by throwing up mountain ranges which prevented silt from passing to the Pacific. This accumulated into gravel beds thousands of feet deep. Then volcanos erupted and buried everything—forests of palms, yuccas and locusts—under a thick layer of tuff. Kneaded together with lava and folded into multi-colored stratas, this geological stew is called the Rosamond series and is one of

Bill Wessel digs among debris in Tin Can Alley, hoping to find a purple bottle.



Our only shade atop Mule Canyon where we paused for lunch was under the canopy of Frank's Pullman Camper.





Bill Wessel thought he had hit a wad of gold with his metal detector, but digging produced a wad of lead foil!

Below: Phillips Drive is rough, but Mule Canyon roads are safe for passenger cars.

the most colorful desert areas of North America.

Almost totally catacombed with mines, Mule Canyon may be traveled by passenger car. Phillips Drive is slightly rougher, but we had no trouble with our VW bus and Frank Fey, Jr. of Downey easily followed us all of the way in his Pullman Camper. One of the tempting side roads is named Tin Can Alley and is easily recognized by its motley accumulation.

If you must throw tin cans around the Calicos, please throw them here. This suggests a likely spot to dig for purple bottles, as bottles usually travel with cans, but a short distance away we hiked back from the road along another trail and found a sizeable mine where Frank picked up pieces of purple glass from the ground. There were no signs of recent digging here and it is probable that under the surface whole bottles could be found.

Although we didn't pass a single vehicle, there were indications that latter day prospectors have visited the area. Marine Capt. Bill Wessel, who also accompanied us, pointed out a number of fires set up in caves along the road. This is an old Western custom that reaches from Alaska to

Texas—anytime a prospector lights a campfire, he leaves a fresh supply of wood set up for the next traveler. It was gratifying to learn that the custom lives on.

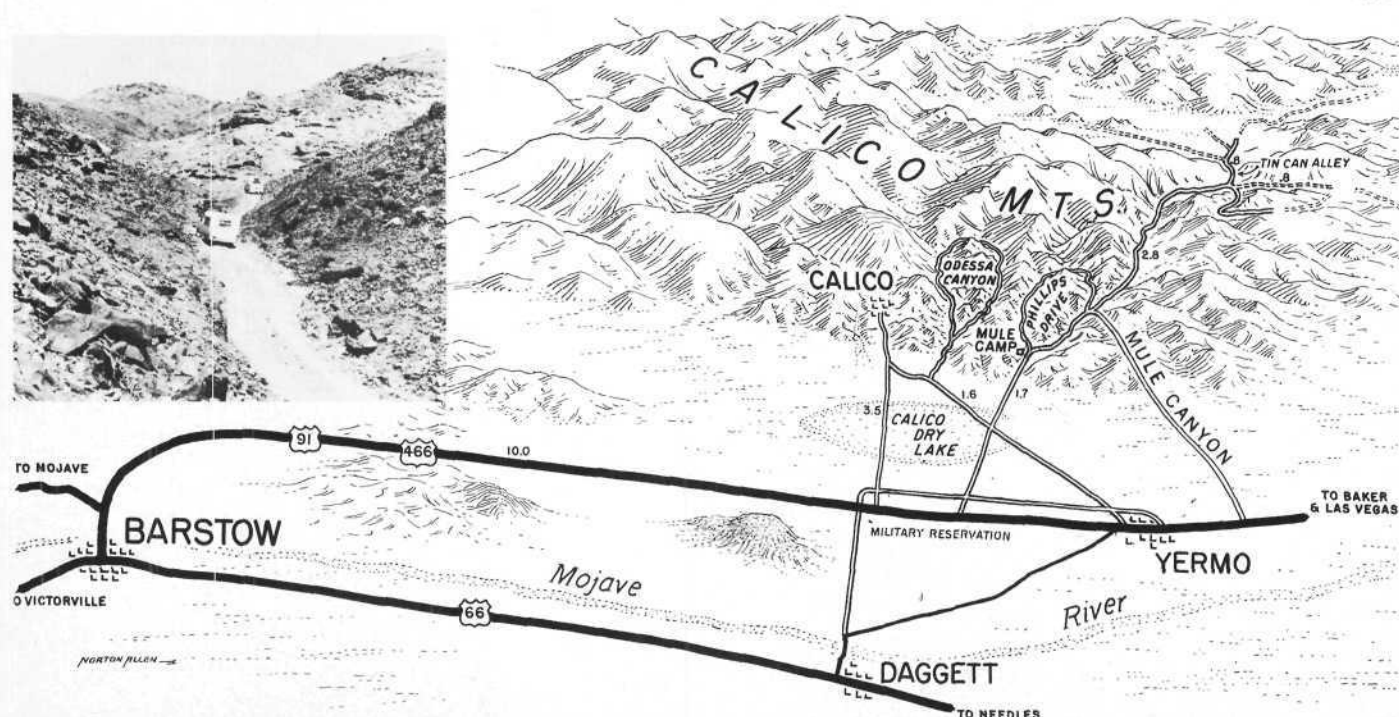
Rockhounds report the area as pretty well picked over, but, of course, each seasonal storm brings forth a new bonanza. Specimens of opal, malachite, jasper, turquoise, borax, fossil wood and chalcedony have been found.

One item that to our knowledge hasn't been found is the famous Kramer Arch. Noted on maps and mentioned in a number of articles, including several in back issues of *DESERT*, the authors never include photos of it nor in their articles do they describe it or give directions. All we have been able to find is a mention that it exists. Major Bill Wessel, who's a pretty good explorer, tramped the countryside with a topographical map, but couldn't find a natural arch in the area where Kramer's Arch is designated. Nor could we.

This is our challenge for future treks to the Calicos. Is there is, or is there isn't an arch? Tops of arches sometimes cave in or erode away. Could this have happened to Kramer?

It has been a long time since, as a child, we chugged through this wonderful Calico land in a model T. Today I know that its lairs are empty of calico cats and if its waterless terrain boasts of any tea, it's ephedra tea, but the mad patchwork of its colorful quilt remains as exquisite to an adult as it was to me as a child.

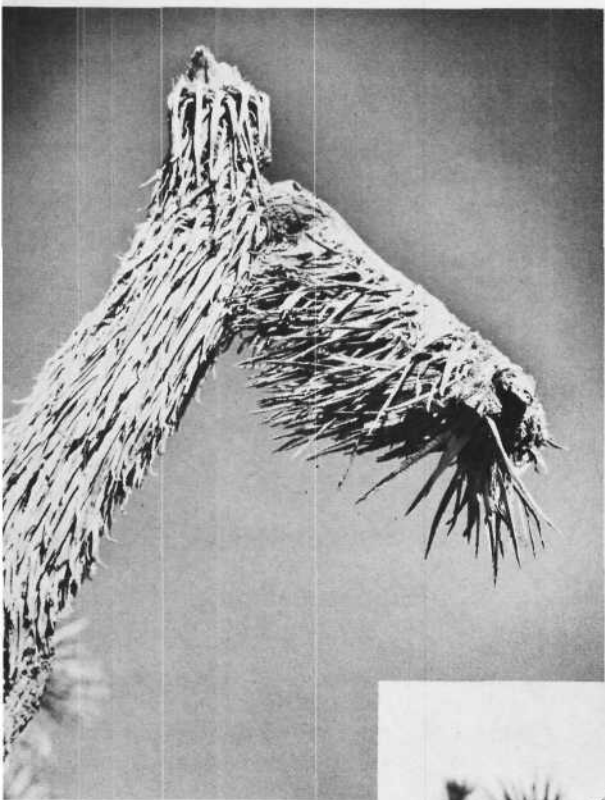
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I thought I could lick the world. Then rigor mortis set in.

If I had any horsesense, I wouldn't be here.




DESERT FACES BY IRENE BRENNAN

A vote for me is a vote for Ballarat.



*Back in those days, I was
Queen of the Line.*





*Golden badlands seen
from Zabrinski Point.*

The

by Marion Harvey

DEATH VALLEY, isolated from the world by mountain ranges and endless miles of barren land, is much the same now as it was over 100 years ago when a group of pioneers arrived there one Christmas Eve by mistake. It was 1849, the year of the California Gold Rush. After finding a way out 26 days later, miraculously, only one person had lost his life. When safely on a pass through the Panamint Mountains, one of the women turned and said, "Good bye, Death Valley." The name has stuck.

People have called Death Valley many things: vast, desolate, bleak, forbidden, strange, fantastic, compelling, weird, intriguing, beautiful, and the ultimate in desert scenery. From the peaks of Dante's View to the salt encrusted badlands below sea level, there is an endless view of multicolored and one-toned mountains, sand, gravel, volcanic rock, and an occasional deserted mining camp or ghost town.

There are good black top roads now, improved dirt and gravel roads, walking and saddle trails. There are five lodging places: the luxurious Furnace Creek Inn, the Furnace Creek Ranch complex which includes cabins, a new motel, a trailer site, a camping site, restaurant, theatre, recreation facilities, post office, museum and nearby Ranger Station and golf course. There is a hotel in connection with Scotty's Castle, a hotel and motel units at Stove Pipe Wells, and one at Wild Rose Station. Only Wild Rose Station and Scotty's Castle have been open in summer.

The famed Borax companies, which began in the 1880's, evoke pictures of 20-mule teams pulling high-wheeled creaking wagons over agonizing miles of hot desert. But borax

Ruins at Rhyolite

ello,

Death

Valley



mining in Death Valley was abandoned early and moved to the high desert of the Mojave, where borax is still mined; not only because the Mojave had a higher grade ore, but also because it was just too hot below. Death Valley's temperature has been as high as 134° in the shade.

All-year accommodations may be found outside Death Valley at Panamint Springs and Shoshone in California and Beatty, Nevada. For the hardy, there are secondary camping grounds at high elevations in the summer. The desert is as treacherous today as it was when the pioneers came through and summer travel in Death Valley is not recommended. The winter visitor, too, can find himself alone on deserted roads which are not patrolled all the time. The Park System issues rules for the visitor which may save his life. The season is from October 15 to May 15, but the Monument is open all year. By April or May, it is apt to be hot already.

Death Valley became a National Monument in 1933. Lying along the eastern edge of Southern California bordering Nevada, part of the Park is in Nevada. The valley is 150 miles long and ranges from 6 to 20 miles wide. In geological times, the Amargosa River (Bitter Waters) and the Mojave River joined before they reached Death Valley. Death Valley was, and is, a natural trough, but the Mojave River never reaches the valley any more and the Amargosa River seldom.

Death Valley contains rocks of all the great geological time divisions and earth movements have been so great that rock masses form complicated patterns of crustal blocks, iso-



Golden Canyon offers outstanding scenic splendor.



Hot spring pool at Furnace Creek Inn

Horseback riders explore floor of Death Valley



lated from one another by faulting, folding, tilting, and ancient lava flow and erosion. From the valley and various viewpoints a visitor can see the rivers of sand and gravel called fans—the alluvium which appears to flow onto the valley floor from naked mountains.

The Indians in the valley today claim to know nothing about the ancient lake-dwellers believed to have lived in prehistoric times along the rim of Lake Manly (now dry). The Panamint Indians, an off-shoot of the Shoshone Nation, drifted in some time later, stayed, but made only a bare living. They called the valley *Tomesha*, Ground Afire. Their subsistence consisted mostly of cactus seeds, grass seeds, mesquite beans, and pine nuts from the Pinon trees of higher elevations. A few Indian families winter in Death Valley today, occupying adobe houses the Federal Government built for them near Furnace Creek Ranch. They no longer follow the Indian rituals or customs and they are there for their own enjoyment.

A brief resume of trips which may be taken on a three-day stay in Death Valley are as follows. In addition, there are a number of others.

Rhyolite, Nevada (three hours from Furnace Creek Center), was abandoned 60 years ago and a more forbidding looking ghost town would be hard to find. All that is left are slabs of stone walls, an ugly Victorian railroad station, the gate to the town and a house made of bottles. From Rhyolite the visitor can drive through Titus Canyon and stop to explore Leadville where a crafty speculator began a boom 40 years ago that burst within a year because the lead was low grade. It is reported that miners built houses along the edge of the canyon,

so narrow there was room for only one row of buildings on each side of the street. None of the buildings remain, but the mine does.

Beyond Leadville, there are miles of canyon road, with just enough room for one-lane traffic, then suddenly the visitor emerges into the valley again and, looking back, cannot see from whence he came. There is still time to see Scotty's Castle, if you left the Center before noon.

The enigma of Death Valley Scotty will not be answered at the castle, which is now managed by the Gospel Foundation, but it will be answered at the Rangers Museum where the rangers hold nightly film lectures on Death Valley.

Golden Canyon, a short drive from the Center and a short walk beyond, is one of the most beautiful canyons we have ever seen and well worth the easy walk. A daily pack trip is made through this area. For those who do not wish to ride so long, it is possible to rent a horse and guide's services for a shorter time and rendezvous with the party as it returns at dusk. Also near the Center are Zabriskie Point, Artist's Drive, 20-Mule Team Canyon, and the Harmony Borax Works. The first and the last should especially be seen.

A walk on the sand dunes, if one drives far enough beyond the first



Titus Canyon Road leads to ghost town site of Leadville.

dunes, will allow the hiker the pleasure of making the only footprints he can see in any direction. The setting sun creates a weird spectrum of brilliant lights and deep shadows which play over the wind-swept sand. Then

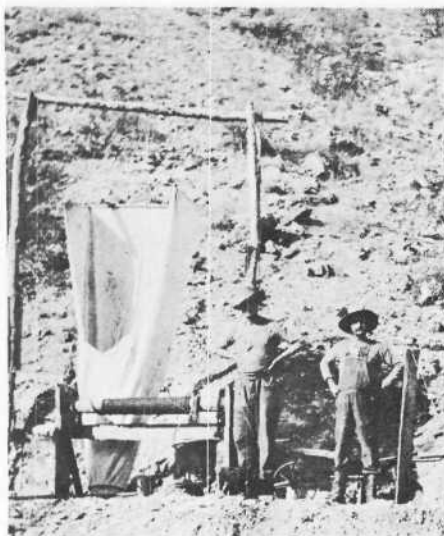
suddenly, when the sun disappears behind the Panamints, the dunes are dead, except where reflections from the sinking sun turn the Funeral Mountains ablaze with a last salute to the end of a wondrous desert day.

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Author's daughter climbs dune near Stovepipe Wells.

Photos by Tom Murray





They Chased the Moon

by Lyman Nash

A PALE SLIVER of moon rides high over the distant mountain. There is a nip in the air and the prospector inches a little closer to the fire.

"It won't be long now," he tells himself, "not long at all and I'll be on Easy Street. Yes, sir, tomorrow or the next day I'm sure to find that ledge of quartz."

Out of the rising smoke laughs the ghost of Jake Breyfogle, laughing as he laughed through the smoke of countless fires on countless nights like this. But the prospector knows that Jake can't go on laughing forever. So he lights his battered corn cob pipe and dreams his golden dream.

It was Breyfogle who first discovered the ledge, stumbled upon it in 1862, quite by accident. He wasn't too interested at the time, being more concerned with eluding Indians, finding water and getting back to civilization. Later, when he recovered from his ordeal, Breyfogle went back to stake his claim. Only the mine wasn't where he left it, or thought he left it, and no one has seen it since.

Until he tripped over a fortune, Breyfogle's life never came under close scrutiny. Nobody cared much where he came from or what he did. He may have been a blacksmith or possibly a prospector, but by all accounts he was a massive pillar of muscle with a shiny bald head and a pair of enormous feet. In the summer of 1862 Breyfogle and two Irishmen, O'Bannion and McCleod, set out from Los Angeles to walk to a silver strike along the Reese River, near Austin, Nevada.

By late June the trio had crossed the Mojave Desert and were coming

down the Death Valley side of the Panamint Range. One night they camped by a small waterhole overlooking the valley's maw. The two Irishmen sacked out close together, but Breyfogle spread his bedroll several hundred yards away, down the slope.

Around midnight he was awakened by a scream. A war party of Paiutes had murdered his companions and were rifling their bodies. Despite his huge size Breyfogle wasn't a brave man, but he turned out to be an exceedingly tough one. Crazed with fear, he grabbed his shoes and fled barefoot down the mountain. Daylight found him on the floor of Death Valley.

You no longer hear of people dying there, but Death Valley came by its name rightly. In those days to cross it at any time was dangerous. To cross it during summer was suicide. If the sun didn't get you, thirst would, or maybe a sidewinder.

Somehow Breyfogle made it. Without a hat. Without water. Alone.

Reaching the foothills of the Funerals, he was sick from the sun and in an agony of thirst. Then, high on a brooding slope, he saw three white patches. The white meant limestone. Limestone meant water. He began to climb.

Toiling upward, half delirious, he came to a ledge of pink quartz. It was mighty fine looking pink quartz so he lopped off a few chunks and wrapped them in a blue bandana. Finally he reached one of the white patches and found water. He drank, rested, filled his shoes and started on, still heading for Austin. Coming to a young mesquite tree, he ate some of its green beans and drank a shoe-ful of water. After that he blanked out.

Days later they found Jake Breyfogle struggling barefoot along the old Mormon Trail, nearly dead from exposure and out of his mind. The top of his bald head was blistered to the bone, and his enormous feet resembled raw hamburger. In his hand he clutched the blue bandana crammed with the chunks of pink quartz.

And the pink quartz was rotten with gold!

It took Breyfogle a long time to recover his health. His feet were slow to heal and six months passed before his bald head once again shined like a waxed honeydew. Then he headed back to the Funerals to claim his fortune. In the Panamints he located the skeletons of O'Bannion and McCleod. From there he retraced his steps across Death Valley, saw the three white patches and started toward them. But the ledge of pink quartz, worth a fortune to the ton, had disappeared.

Breyfogle looked for it the rest of his life and never found it. Neither did the thousands of others who followed in his wake. Men are still hunting it today.

Now there are some who claim the Lost Breyfogle is actually the Bullfrog mine at Rhyolite, while others maintain it is the Jumbo X at Goldfield. But a sample of gold heavy quartz, said to be Breyfogle's, is in the courthouse at Austin, Nevada, and it doesn't match either of those two ores.

The most popular theory is that one of the violent thunderstorms that occasionally shake the area covered the ledge with tons of stone and dirt. Or perhaps Breyfogle got mixed up on his bearings and the ledge is right where it always was, the gold glinting in the sun, waiting to be rediscovered. Perhaps the prospector drawn up to



his fire is right—Jake can't go on laughing forever.

Other ghosts dance above other campfires. Not far away another prospector throws a blanket over Bessie, his burro, and returns to dream of a mountain of silver.

In a wagon train moving west was an immigrant who had broken the sight from his gun. To replace it he dug a piece of malleable metal from the side of a hill, twisting it around the barrel. When he reached the next settlement, he took the gun to a gunsmith, asking him to fashion the raw metal into a proper sight.

"Why, this is pure silver," said the astounded gunsmith.

"It is?" gulped the even more astounded immigrant. "Well, I ran across a whole mountain of the stuff."

"Where?"

"I don't know for sure. Back along the trail somewhere. Shouldn't be too hard to find."

It was harder than he thought. News of the silver mountain spread like wildfire, attracting prospectors like moths to a candle. They were still looking for it when Jim Marshall picked up an ounce of yellow dust at Sutter's Mill and changed the history of the United States. As soon as all the free gold had been looted from

the streams and mountains, men once more started thinking of silver. But no one ever found the Lost Gunsight.

Legends like these live in the smoke of a thousand campfires. Hunker down by the embers after the beans are gone and the flames have burned low and the night wind murmurs in the pines, and you'll hear about these lost mines. About the Chicken Craw mine in Nevada where nuggets were found in chicken craws. About the Blue Bucket up in Oregon where children collected gold nuggets in a toy blue pail. Or was it in Idaho? Wherever it was, the mother lode still waits.

Almost certainly you'll hear about White's Lost Cement Mine. Nobody knows if White had a front handle to his name or not, but in 1858 he arrived in Horse Head Gulch, Colorado, with a burro load of hard clay containing gold. The clay assayed at \$15,000 to the ton.

At gunpoint White was forced to lead the rest of the camp to the source of his clay. Instead, he led the camp on a wild goose chase before he was able to escape. Half the expedition perished in a blizzard. The other half gave up in disgust.

In 1861 White showed up in Salt Lake City with more of the "cement," even richer in gold than the first batch. A few days later he and his

burro walked out of town and disappeared forever. With him went the secret of his bonanza.

And as the smoke curls upward you can almost see Pegleg Smith beckoning you to come look for his mine, perhaps the most completely lost of all. They called him Pegleg because one of his legs was sturdy oak and on it, in the year 1837, he was stumping from Yuma, Arizona to Los Angeles. When he got there he was weighted down by \$10,000 in gold nuggets.

"Found 'em on three hills near the Colorado River," he said. "The tops are loaded with gold. All you gotta do is bend over and scoop it up. Those hills are easy to spot. They stand by themselves between Walker's and Warner's Pass and are sort of yellowish at the bottom and black on top. You can't miss 'em."

But miss them you could and miss them he did. Pegleg's oaken limb punched holes all over that country and he never saw those hills again. About the time of the Gold Rush he dropped out of existence and his mine was forgotten. But shortly after the Civil War another gent arrived in Los Angeles with \$7,000 in nuggets and a story very similar to Pegleg's. He'd found the nuggets on three black hills just west of the Colorado.

So Pegleg beckons through the smoke; and to the lonely prospector

and the moon was gold

sitting by his fire, the riddle of the vanished hills will be solved tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

There are other ghosts appearing in the smoke. There's Jesse Ewing up Utah way and Adams down in Grant County, New Mexico, both with fortunes for the finding. Yes, the old-timers had a knack for losing mines. Some they even lost twice, like the Lost Phantom in Colorado. When last seen, in 1881, the ore assayed at more than \$40,000 per ton.

Not that mine losing was a particularly difficult pastime. Most were lost when the West was still in its brawling infancy, unsurveyed and pretty largely unexplored. If a man wandered too far from the beaten trails, he stood a good chance of being skewered by an Indian spear, and more than one partnership was quickly and permanently dissolved

Peralta organized a last great expedition into what are now Arizona's Superstition Mountains. There were 400 men and 600 pack animals. For weeks ore was dug, smelted and cast into ingots. Finally the expedition started homeward, to Sonora in Old Mexico.

Meanwhile, in the surrounding hills, the Apaches were massing, ready to wreak blood vengeance on the Mexicans for violating the home of the Thunder Gods. As the heavily laden pack train wound out of the mountains, a shrieking army of Apaches swept down on it, killing the men and slaughtering the animals. Two small boys who had hidden in a bush were the only survivors.

Years passed. The boys grew to manhood and returned to work the mine. It was then that bearded Jacob Walz entered the scene. Crossing Ari-

"Under my bed, in a chest, you'll find some nuggets and a map to the mine," he gasped to a friend. "The mine is near a sharp peak called Weaver's Needle and close by is a palo verde tree."

The friend searched for years and was never able to find the entrance to the shaft. As time marched the legend of the Lost Dutchman became deadlier and deadlier. Over 100 men have met death hunting it, mostly by murder. The list is still growing.

In 1931 Adolph Ruth arrived in Arizona from Washington, D.C., with a map to the mine and bursting with confidence. Six months later his skull was found near Weaver's Needle, neatly punctured by a bullet. The rest of his body was found a half mile away with all his personal belongings. The only thing missing was the map.

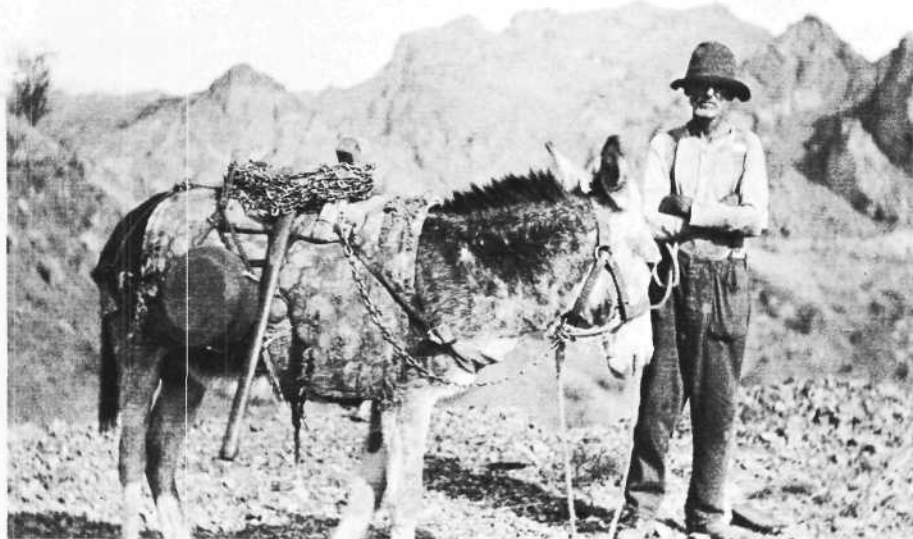
James A. Cravey met a similar fate 17 years later, but this time there were two bullet holes. In October, 1960, an Austrian exchange student at the University of Arizona fell under the fatal spell of the Lost Dutchman. A coroner's jury returned a verdict of "murder by a person or persons unknown." And just last year a Denver research chemist was killed by a .38 slug as he stood gazing up at Weaver's Needle.

Who is responsible for the killings none can say. A fanatic? A maniac? Perhaps a man who has found the gold or expects to find it and wants to be sure no one will beat him to it? All we know for sure is that the gold is there, hidden somewhere near that sharp peak in the Superstition Mountains, less than 50 miles east of Phoenix. Until the mystery is solved, men will continue to be lured by its promise of fabulous wealth, and probably continue to die in the quest. But to the lonely prospector, asleep after the ghosts have departed, that is all part of the golden dream. Gold never did come easy and never will.

So, as the pale moon chuckles to the grey dawn, he crawls from his blanket and prepares for another day, a day that might put him on Easy Street. It's a wonderful dream that never comes true. For it is not the gold that fascinates the prospector—it is finding the gold.

That's why, should you ever make a sharp turn onto Easy Street, you'll look in vain for prospectors. They'll be off chasing their lonesome dreams, with only the ghosts of Breyfogle, Pegleg and Jacob Walz to share their solitude.

///



Old grubstake prospector Pete Daily wandered Death Valley for over 30 years.

with a ball of lead. So a man wasn't apt to spend too much time studying landmarks.

Across the West fires burn and the ghosts come out, to mock and jeer and lure you on and on. But brightest of all, and laughing fit to kill, is the shade of Jacob Walz, the Dutchman.

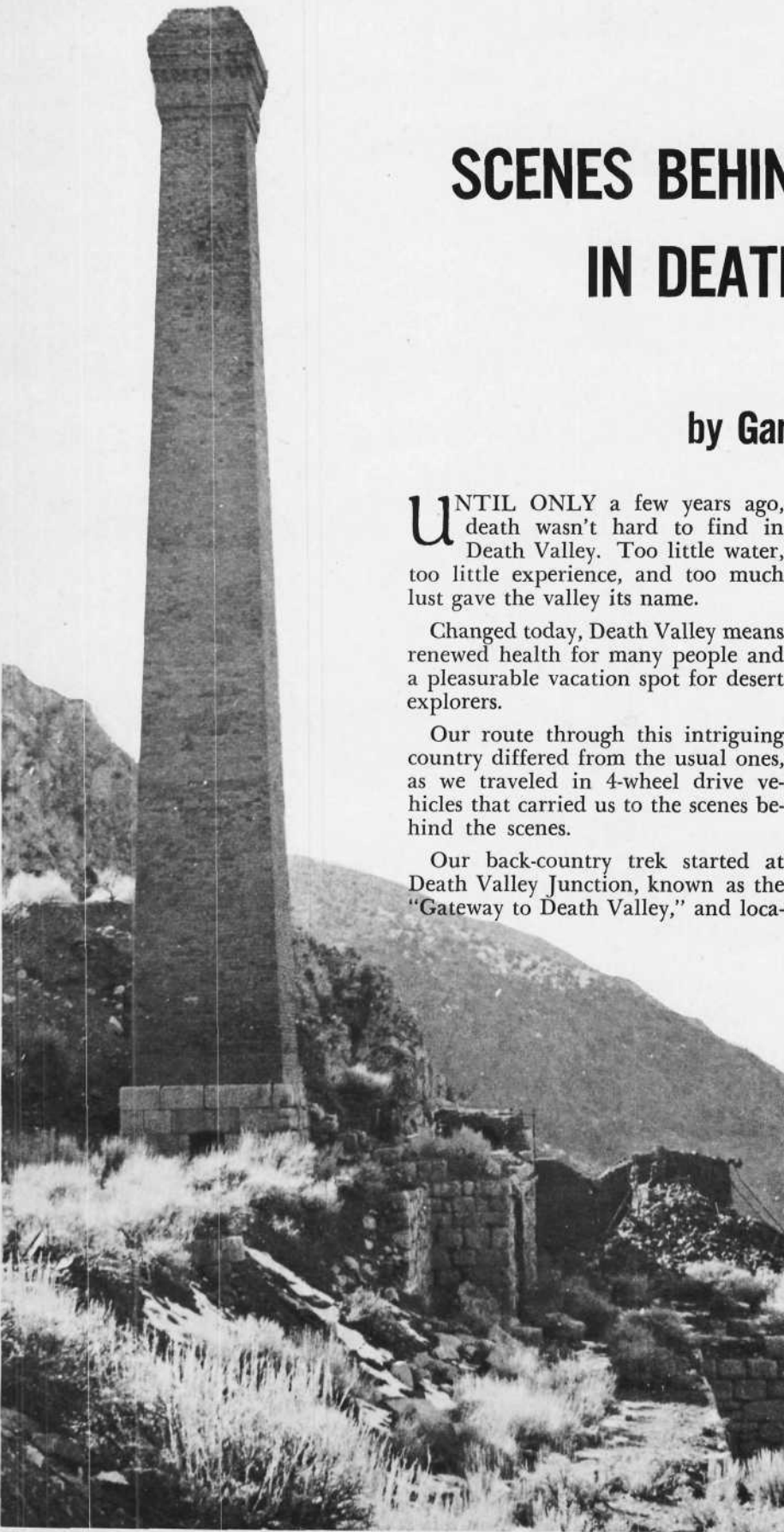
It wasn't his mine to begin with. He stole it from two Mexicans who took it from Don Miguel Peralta who, in turn, had taken it from the Apaches. Don Miguel had been growing rich on the mine for years when the United States acquired the territory through the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Knowing the *gringos* wouldn't tolerate his working the mine, Senor

zona, he was set upon by Indians and in fleeing discovered a trail winding high into the Superstitions.

Walz followed the trail and eventually came to where the two men were working the old Peralta diggings. It was the richest ore he had ever seen, nuggets big as walnuts that shimmered in the light of a lantern like miniature suns. Walz claimed the mine by shooting the Mexicans and obliterating all traces of the entrance.

He worked the mine for fifteen years in secret. During that time at least eight men shadowed him into the Superstitions and never came out. In 1884 "Snowbeard the Dutchman" lay dying in his shack on the outskirts of Phoenix.



SCENES BEHIND THE SCENES IN DEATH VALLEY

by Gary Moore

UNTIL ONLY a few years ago, death wasn't hard to find in Death Valley. Too little water, too little experience, and too much lust gave the valley its name.

Changed today, Death Valley means renewed health for many people and a pleasurable vacation spot for desert explorers.

Our route through this intriguing country differed from the usual ones, as we traveled in 4-wheel drive vehicles that carried us to the scenes behind the scenes.

Our back-country trek started at Death Valley Junction, known as the "Gateway to Death Valley," and loca-

ted 90 miles north of Baker, California on Highway 127.

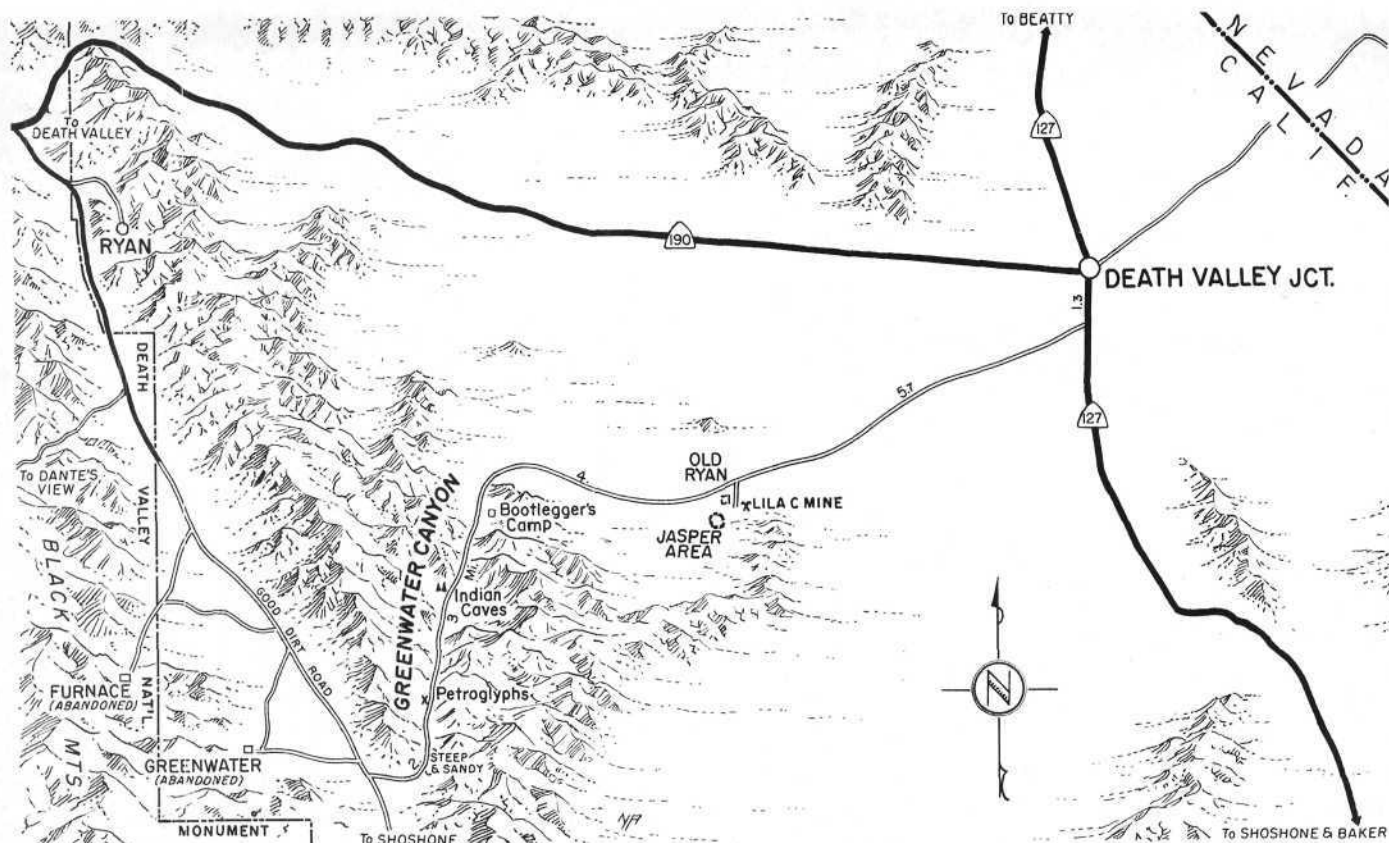
At Death Valley Junction, we stopped to collect wood for our campfire. In spite of its reputation, autumn nights in Death Valley can be cold. Supplied with wood, we backtracked south for approximately one and two-tenths miles. You have to keep your eyes open for the turnoff here as it has been hidden by grading on the shoulder of the road. Even so, the road is barely discernible and should not be attempted in a passenger car. After one mile, we stopped to make our first night's camp.

Dawn came early and soon the coffee was gone and we were off on the second leg of our journey. Five miles on the trail brought us to the Lila C. Mine. The town of Ryan was once located here, but later moved to its present location on the west side of Greenwater Mountain.

The Lila C. Mine covered most of the mountain on which it was located both above and below ground with tunnels, tailings shafts, and buildings. A generous litter from bygone days—shovels, canteens, cooking utensils—remained undisturbed by modern relic seekers and we left it as we found it. In a dugout near the mine were found an egg carton dated 1920, a 1923 newspaper and a tobacco wrapper with a 1901 tax stamp.

Exploration over, we journeyed westward towards Greenwater Canyon. Taking a chance, we crossed

Rare relic at Panamint City is this 150-foot stack. Slowly crumbling, it will not last much longer.



a rotted wooden bridge. Fortunately it held up better than it looked like it would. After two miles we entered Greenwater Canyon.

Greenwater Canyon is about 11 miles long and not the most scenic drive, but interesting. An old railroad used this canyon at one time. Almost all signs of it are gone now, but a slight bit of roadbed is evident here and there. There were other signs of occupation along the canyon, such as rock foundations and piles of rusty cans.

From the canyon, we proceeded into Greenwater Valley. Two miles brought us to the main dirt road leading from Highway 190 into Death Valley. One-half mile north on the main road is a sign which reads "Water 5 Mi." with an arrow pointing up a dirt road.

This is also the road to the old town of Greenwater. Anxious to see water flowing from the dry desert floor, we postponed exploring the site of the town and passed through it in the direction of additional signs indicating the spring. This was a mistake. The road ended in a small box canyon where another sign read "Water 100 ft." After dashing up the gully, we found our spring dry as dust. Moral: when traveling in the desert, don't trust signs!

From here we retraced our trail to Greenwater. Like most mining towns, it was born overnight and

within a year had a population of 2000. The proud possessor of a \$100,000 bank, two newspapers, and a magazine called the *Death Valley Chuckwalla*, Greenwater was one of the wildest camps in Death Valley—probably due to the fact that it was the farthest outpost of desert mining during the 1900s. Claims were made that here existed the world's largest copper deposits.

At this time gambling was illegal in California, but not in Greenwater. Reaching its peak in 1907, it was the first mining area in California that could be reached by auto. Gasoline sold for \$1.00 per gallon.

Although the town had a spring, from which it received its name, water was hauled 30 miles and sold for 15c a gallon. A panic in 1907 brought trouble to the camp when the mine ran out of ore at 200 feet and investment money was suddenly gone. Its demise was complete.

All lumber in the town was hauled to Shoshone, which explained why there is nothing there now. However, we uncovered several old bottles.

Our next destination was Kunze, but it isn't much of a town anymore, even for ghosts. Mines are numerous, but dwellings few. We found only one—a stone shelter built snug against a hill.

Kunze was founded by a miner, Arthur Kunze, who discovered a

promising ore deposit here. The only problem was, it was copper and everyone hungered for gold.

In 1906 the railroad at Rhyolite brought the valley closer to civilization. Kunze struck paydirt and sold out. Charles Schwuab, President of Bethlehem Steel, was among the magnates who bought shares. What happened to Kunze after that is a mystery, at least to me.

Leaving Kunze, we drove past the site of Furnace, equally void of remains, and continued north on the main road toward Furnace Creek where we stopped to buy supplies. Then, on the road again, we headed north to the Keane Wonder Mine, about 14 miles.

The sun had already set when we pulled into our campsite for a short night. Barely had the morning sun peeked over the mountain when, full of bacon and eggs, we started our hike to the Keane Wonder Mine.

This was the highlight of our trip. A tramway and engine house was almost perfectly preserved with cables still in place and ore buckets hung here and there. The tramway spanned a vast canyon to the mine on the opposite side. At least a half-dozen ore buckets still dangled in mid-air.

The walk down was easier than the walk up. When we returned to our vehicles the sun was high in the

east and it was time to be on our way. A drive through Boundary Canyon led to Daylight Pass where we had a beautiful view of the Amargosa Desert. Continuing to Beatty, we purchased gas and supplies and then back-tracked six miles to the Leadfield turnoff.

Leadfield is at the head of Titus Canyon. It was founded by a quack promoter by the name of C. C. Julian. Julian was under investigation by the government and wags of the time said, "Leadfield mined more stockholders pockets than mountains." To-day only two structures stand among the many foundations and mines.

The road out, through Titus Canyon, is murder on late model autos—much worse than it is entering. With 4-wheel drives we had fairly easy going, but we passed car upon car feeling a way down the canyon.

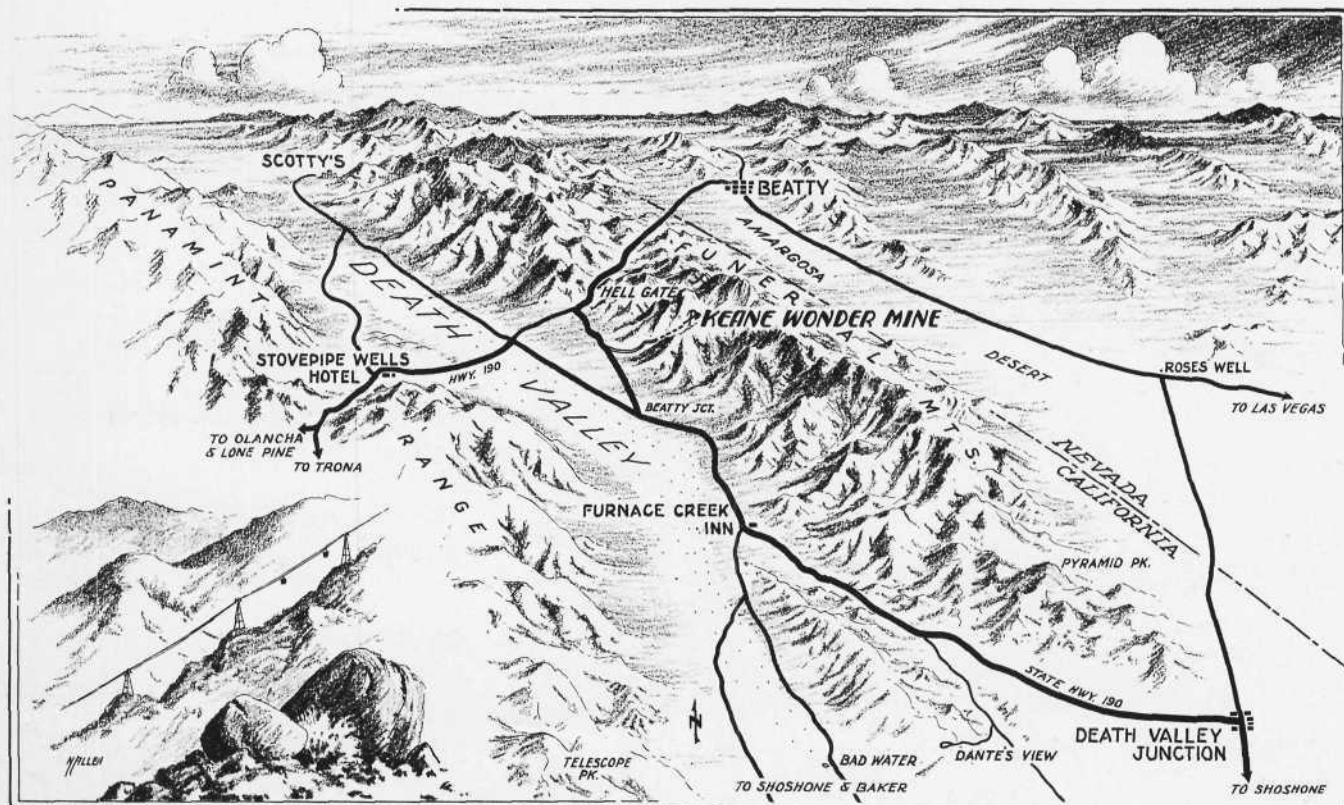
After leaving the canyon, we turned south toward Stovepipe Wells. It was about 4:00 and shadows folded dramatically around the dunes. Nine miles south of Stovepipe Wells, on the Emigrant Canyon Road turnoff, we drove until slightly after dark. After setting up camp atop a hill overlooking Emigrant Canyon and Harrisburg Flats, we explored the surrounding area and uncovered an old claim marker. Inside the cairn we found a tobacco can with a scrap of paper inside which located boundaries of a claim. I can't recall the name, but it was dated February 3, 1913.



Cave hut at the Lila C Mine indicates the hard life of its early occupants.

Early the next morning we reached Skidoo. Skidoo is one of the most famous of the Death Valley towns and a popular tourist attraction. After reaching its peak in 1907, it met the same fate as other overnight mining towns. Skidoo did not die fast though, it struggled downward for 10 years. The grand finale came when the pipeline that carried water 23 miles for Telescope Peak was sold during World War I. Without water, Skidoo didn't have a chance. It died of thirst.

Leaving Skidoo, we curved down the winding road to Harrisburg. This town is still slightly inhabited and mining operations continue on a small scale. Harrisburg was discovered by Shorty Harris and Pete Aguerreberry. Pete and Shorty hurried to file their claim, but the rush came sooner than usual and the Flats were covered by miners in less than two days. Nevertheless, Pete and Shorty ousted most of the claim jumpers. Population didn't reach more than 300, but



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it was one of the few camps that paid for itself.

Back on the highway we turned off onto the dusty Indian Ranch Road which connects with the road to Panamint. The drive through Surprise Canyon was beautiful, with a blue sky overhanging a tight squeeze of gray cliffs.

Chris Witches' Camp is the first sign of civilization on this route. In the Autumn, trees blanket the camp with vivid reds and yellows. Buildings are in poor condition, but a meandering spring emptying into a pond gives the desert camp a lush charm.

Surprise Canyon ends at Panamint, one of the roughest camps in the old West. Although it was one of the colorful towns, it rose and died within three years. Roads led to it from all points in California and it boasted a population of 2000. Prices were high; eggs sold for \$2 a dozen and hay sold for more than \$200 a ton. Panamint fostered more saloons than anything else, but it also supported a bank, brewery and even a meat market.

Silver ore assayed out as high as \$3000 a ton, but didn't last long. When the panic hit California, Panamint's entire population disappeared



A lush spring runs through Chris Witch Camp.

all at once. The last working mine closed in May, 1877. Most of the dwellings were swept away by floods, but the jailhouse has withstood the weather fairly well. A tall chimney on the old smelter is beginning to fall. By next winter it may not be there.

As a big moon rose over Panamint Mountains we drove to Trona to make our last camp—in a comfortable hot-and-cold-water motel! Then, early the following morning we turned toward home, bidding a reluctant goodbye to this Valley called Death.

///

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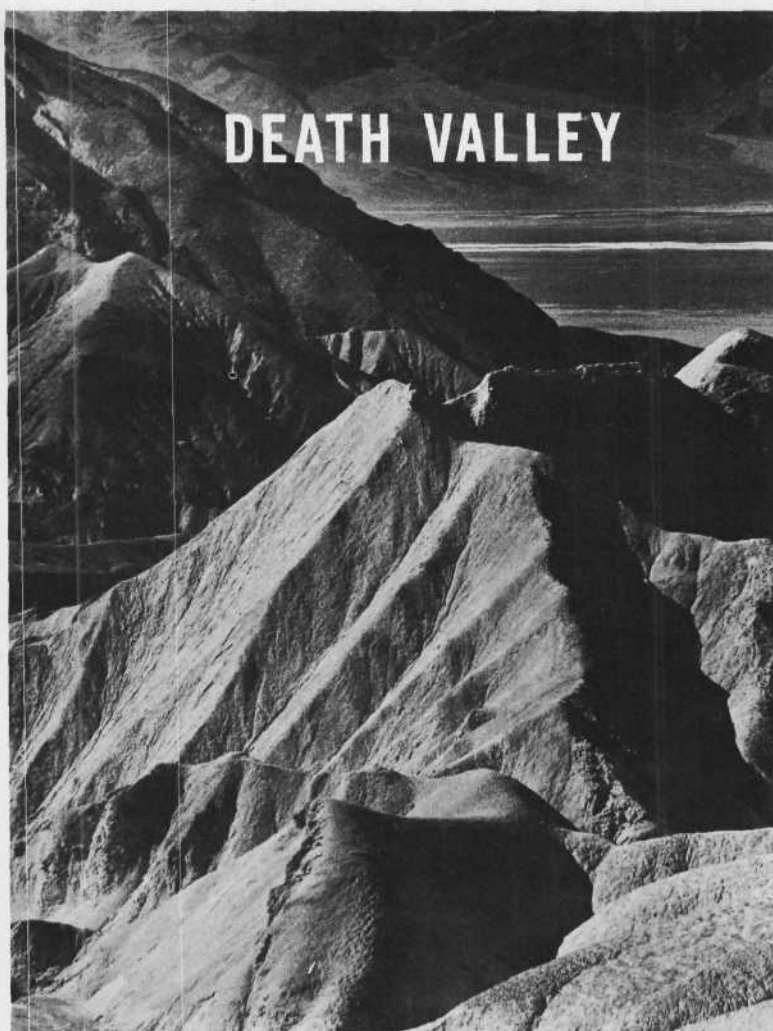
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DEATH VALLEY

Photo by Tom Murray

Night winds are rising and their fiery breath
 Shrieks through the moving sand dunes bleak and drear,
 The chanting Shoshones tremble at your death
 In these burnt wastes. Prospector, can you hear
 The Funeral's ridge wings, beating downdrafts, spill
 Stone clouds on your sepulchuric hill
 Off Panamint, where barking foxes slink
 The blowing greasewood with the hunters' tread
 And screeching owls, defying storm, are led
 To rune drifts; off Zabriskie where the sink
 Of Death Valley traps travelers too long
 With silence? One coyote's muted song
 Alerts a couching hare. Winds move the sand,
 Prospector, hunting you, and the teeth slash
 At the winds throat and wring it in the clash
 Of midnight in this graveyard where the band
 Of Shoshones chant their old friend's bones
 Lost now by wind's wings beneath the moving stones.

—Paul Wilhelm



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THE YELLOW ASTER

by
Carl Macur

AT THE CLOSE of the 19th century a dull explosion reverberated throughout the California Mojave desert. Its momentary shock rocked ticker tapes of Wall Street 3000 miles away.

A cry of "Gold" gave birth to the fantastic Yellow Aster Mine, the mother of the town of Randsburg. From the day of her discovery in 1895 by Mooers, Singleton and Burcham up to the war year of 1942, she spewed, at current gold prices, over \$60 million worth of bullion from 50 miles of entrails and half of her mountainous body. Today, unscrupulously robbed of gold-bearing quartz, this half-mountain with its timber-rotted, water-filled tunnels stands as a dor-

mant giant overlooking its offspring, Randsburg.

At one time Randsburg boasted of a population of "500 children." Recently it was forlornly stated that the population now stands at "about 100 men, women and children and those who died only the other day." New parts of town suggest confidence in the future, with freshly painted houses and short, clean streets. But in the old part of town skeleton abodes harass the landscape and abandoned rust-ridden auto frames polka-dot its fringe, their prayer wheels challenging the strongest of men to give them a quarter turn.

From the time of my initial visit to Randsburg, I was hooked. Within a period of three months I had returned as many times. It intrigued me—its Post Office with a sign that read 1896, its White House Saloon with a long bar of carved African mahogany shipped from around the Horn and unpatched bullet holes still pocking its adobe walls.

The Yellow Aster Mill high on the hill needed no introduction. Nor did the towering half-mountain behind it, rising some 4000 feet above its gutted golden base. But that was only the outside. I wanted in.

It was Billie Blue who opened the door. Billie is the oldest living resident of Randsburg—84-years-old and once an engineer for the fabulous Yellow Aster. It was his stories that fired my desire to explore further. The "Sesame" that eventually made this possible came about through an introduction to Stewart Fraser, custodian of the mine.

My tour began.

From a 3500-foot elevation, we climbed to 4000 feet on the sharp dirt road. Already I dreaded the treacherous return. Our destination was the 50-stamp mill. Upon entering it, I was surprised to find the equipment in perfect condition. "All it takes is the word and I can have this mill operating within two months," Stewart claimed. And I believed him.

From the engine room we walked between blasted canyon walls for about 50 yards to the half-body of the Yellow Aster herself. As we stood low in the deep bowl of what had once been a fat mountain of gold ore, I felt as infinitesimal as a button.

"Don't get too close to the edges," Stewart warned. "We have a lot of slides down here when some of those boulders shake loose." As we explored tunnel after tunnel, he'd frustrate me with "That's far enough now, Carl. Let's get out while it's still safe."



As time went on, I visited Randsburg frequently. When stories of the Yellow Aster mine were recounted, I edged closer. My interest grew almost into a phobia. Then, one day—bonanza!

Stewart invited me to visit his storage place—a basement in an old building. All of the documents, papers and statistics pertinent to the Yellow Aster were stored there. Would I like to rummage around, he asked? I sure would! The combination concrete and dirt floor was literally covered with dusty crates, cartons, machinery, and newspapers. Stewart left me to myself and I went to work.

In the first carton I found dated manila packets stamped with a red wax seal. The first was dated January, 1898 and enclosed were receipts for purchases made by the mine-owners. An anvil and block cost \$12, a pick \$1, coal 3c per pound, room and board \$1 per day.

A collect telegram to John Singleton, president of the Yellow Aster read, "My son still alive. No hope for him. Will wire again in a day or two. Signed S. P. Mahan." What stories my mind conjured!

A written directive from Burcham to pay the bearer of this note a sum of \$20 to be deducted from the monthly pay check of a gentleman named Ben Strug was signed received by MRS. Ben Strug! In another box I found cartons of the Yellow Aster's cancelled checks—beautiful checks imprinted with gold leaf lettering and the yellow aster insignia of the mine. One batch had 2c documentary stamps affixed. Other cartons held receipts from the old Wells Fargo and Company. These, too, carried documentary and U.S. postage stamps dated from 1898 through 1902.

I uncovered a stock certificate book of cancelled shares with gleaming gold seals. At \$10 a share, the book con-

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tained \$956,590 of cancelled gold stock certificates. Best of all, I found one signed by Singleton with the number of shares and the owner's block unlisted, so I had Stewart quill my name for 100,000 shares. Now I'm a cancelled gold certificate million-aire!

Monthly time books listed the names of all mine employees. Muckers were paid \$3 a day and miners \$3.50. There were no Sundays at the Yellow Aster.

Perusing this material and its information, I revisited the Boothill Cemetery at Johannesburg, sister town of Randsburg, and I haunted the Silver Dollar Museum in Red Mountain, which holds relics of the mine. I can now state that within a period of three months, my imagination has lived 69 years of the Yellow Aster's life.

Throughout that 69 years, three million tons of gold ore had been processed. Its dumps still hold an additional million tons that were too costly to process even in those days.

Someday she may live again. In only one body of blocked-off ore there is an estimated \$15 million of gold. However, labor costs and present gold

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prices render it unprofitable to mine. Nevertheless, I'd give a lot to stand on the rumbling ground as her 100-stamp mill capacity furiously ground the gold to dust.

Senior citizen Billie Blue once remarked, "It was about two in the morning, some years back. For some reason I awoke from a deep sleep. Something was wrong. It was quiet. Too quiet. The ground no longer rumbled. Then it struck me. It was the Yellow Aster mill. She had stopped."

How I'd like to see things sound right for Billie again, while he's still around to know what's going on! ///



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BALLARAT BY LAMBERT FLORIN

A monthly feature by the author of *Ghost Town Album*,
Ghost Town Trails and Western Ghost Towns

GHOST TOWN lore has many facets. One of these is the unearthing of facts leading to the bestowing of their odd names. Ballarat, for example. About two years after the discovery of gold in the Mother Lode of California, the yellow stuff was also found down under in the southern section of Australia. That mining camp was called Ballarat and in 1869 a nugget was unearthed that weighed an incredible 2,284 ounces. Fame of this appropriately named "Welcome" nugget spread around the world, reaching even to a tiny, unnamed gold camp in the sizzling desert at the edge of the Panamints in Southern California. Hopefully, the founders of the diggings christened it (with whiskey, of course) Ballarat. Perhaps another such chunk of gold would be found there!

The Panamint Valley, a glaring white, dry lake bed, butts against the

steeply rising Panamints. These culminate in Telescope Peak, 11,045 feet above the townsite. Trees are completely lacking, except near the summits of the mountains. With no lumber, nor even logs, Ballarat was literally created out of the adobe clay it stood upon. Rather than "constructed," you might say that its buildings were "mixed" on the spot!

Actual mining was carried on in several nearby canyons. One of these cradled Panamint City, notorious even in those wild days as one of the most lawless in the entire West. Panamint was too cramped to accommodate a dance floor in its narrow defile so when its citizens wanted room to spread out they came down the draw to Ballarat. Several of the fairly extensive ruins remaining today are those of saloons and dancehalls.

Many of Ballarat's adobe buildings are melted away, but those still standing make a visit worthwhile. ///

IMPERIAL VALLEY

EIGHTH ANNUAL

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and

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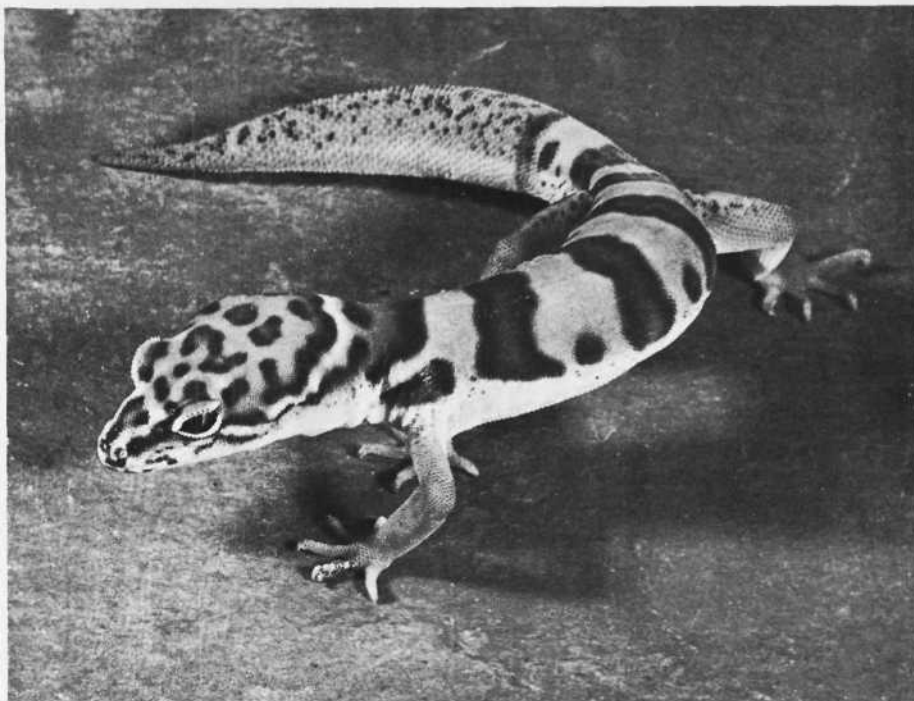
GIANT PARADE
10 a.m. NOV. 7
RODEOS 2 p.m.
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Monsters in Miniature

By BOB and JAN YOUNG



IN THIS ATOMIC age there is perhaps nothing more suggestive of the pre-historic past when reptiles ruled the earth than to witness a gecko running in an upright position.

While he usually adopts this position only when frightened, he has the the courage of a poker player bluffing with a four-flush. With mouth open, the gecko looks like a miniature Tyrannosaurus rex (one of those creatures the movies recreate in horror films), standing ready to devour anyone who touches him. But it is quite another thing when you capture him. Then he emits squeaks like a frightened mouse, something quite a bit less terrifying than the threatening posture he had assumed to scare off his enemy.

Widely distributed through the Southern California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and Mexican deserts, the gecko is a slender and elongated lizard of about five or six inches at

maturity with delicate nails on his toes and fingers. He has a head as big as a hangover fitted with eyes that express the sheer, wide-eyed innocence of a man who's income tax return has been questioned. His basic color is yellowish-gray with broad, transverse brown bands on his smooth skin.

It may be the seemingly scaleless texture of the gecko's skin which makes him principally a nocturnal wanderer. Though he loves rocky crevices, mesquite, cactus and the desert hills generally, he eschews the desert sunlight and spends his day hidden beneath flat rocks which are warm by the sun, but offer protection from its direct rays.

The gecko family boasts of a number of species—some with sticky, adhesive pads on their feet which permit them to walk upside down on ceilings and similar places. In primitive areas where geckos flourish, natives often

fear them as they would venomous snakes, considering even their touch poisonous! Curiously, too, the gecko is sometimes referred to as the "Father of Leprosy," even though he has absolutely no connection with the feared Hansen's disease.

A western variety does have the odd designation of the Leaf-footed or Tubercular Gecko and one Southern California type has small wart-like tubercles on its skin, but they are simply characteristic of the lizard, such as a human may have a mole or a birth mark.

Geckos are friendly, harmless and make fine pets for the youngsters. Regardless of what anyone says, they are enduring friends of man: nothing pleases them more than termites. They thrive on and relish these little wood pirates. So, if geckos are common in your area, leave them alone. These miniature throwbacks to the past may be guarding your house!

IMPERIAL VALLEY

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Desert COOKERY

Food Editor

Lucille Iredale Carleson

SUPER HAM SANDWICH

- 2 cups ground cooked ham
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/4 cup India Pickle relish
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish mustard
- 3 English muffins, cut in half and toasted
- 6 slices cheese
- 6 thin slices tomato

Combine ham, onion, pickle, mayonnaise and mustard and spread about 1/3 cup of mixture on toasted side of muffin half. Broil 3 inches from heat for 5 minutes. Place a slice of cheese on top of each sandwich and broil for 2 minutes. Place slice of tomato on each and broil about 3 minutes longer, or until heated through.

HOT SANDWICHES

- 4 hamburger buns
- Sliced ham for 4 sandwiches
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2 hard boiled eggs

Butter bun halves and toast. Heat baked ham with a little water in a skillet, covered. Heat soup with milk. Stir in sliced eggs. Place ham on toasted buns and spoon sauce over top.

HAM WITH SWEET POTATOES

- 1 No. 2 can sweet potatoes.
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- pepper
- 1 1/2 lbs. raw or baked ham, diced
- 1 No. 2 can pineapple rings

Arrange sweet potatoes in bottom of shallow buttered casserole. Dot with butter, and sprinkle sugar, nutmeg and pepper on top. Then add the ham in a thick layer and top with pineapple rings. Pour pineapple juice over all. Bake in 350 degree oven for 35 minutes. Serves 4.

HAM HAWAIIAN

- 2 tablespoons butter
 - 1 teaspoon curry powder
 - 1 cup diced celery
 - 1 medium onion chopped
 - 1 green pepper cut in thin strips
 - 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 - 1 9-oz. can pineapple tidbits
 - 1/2 cup orange juice
 - 2 cups cooked ham, cut in thin strips
 - 1/4 cup slivered blanched almonds
- Melt butter in large heavy frying pan. Add curry powder, celery, onion and green pepper. Saute over low heat for 10 minutes, or until vegetables are almost tender, then blend in cornstarch. Drain syrup from pineapple, add water to make one cup; add this, orange juice and pineapple to mixture in pan. Cook, stirring constantly until sauce thickens and boils for 1 minute. Add ham and almonds and simmer a few minutes to heat through. Serve with hot cooked rice and sprinkle shredded coconut over top.

MUSTARD SAUCE

- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons prepared mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar

Chill cream and whip until stiff. Add lemon juice slowly, then sugar, still whipping. Fold in mustard.

MUSTARD RING

- 4 eggs
- 3/4 cup sugar

Beat well, and add 3 tablespoons mustard and 2/3 cup vinegar. Cook in double boiler until thick. Remove and add 1 tablespoon gelatin, which has been dissolved in 1/4 cup cold water. Cool and fold in 1/2 pint cream, whipped stiff.

BAKED HAM

- 1 fully cooked ham (8 or 10 lbs.)
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons apple juice or cider
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- Whole cloves

Place ham on rack in shallow roasting pan. Insert meat thermometer in center, away from bone. Bake in 325 degree oven until thermometer registers 130 or about 3 hours. In a small bowl, mix together the brown sugar, apple juice or cider and mustard. About 40 minutes before ham is done, remove from oven. With a sharp knife, remove remaining skin. Make diagonal cuts in fat layer, about 1 1/2 inches apart to form a diamond pattern. Brush on some of the brown sugar mixture. Stud with cloves and return to oven. Baste several times with remaining brown sugar mixture.

BANANA HAM ROLLS

- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1/4 cup sliced onion
- 1 tablespoon salad oil
- 1 9-oz. can pineapple tidbits
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon monosodium glutamate
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- Dash pepper
- 8 medium-size, green tipped bananas (must not be very ripe)
- 8 sliced boiled ham

Cook celery and onion in heated oil until crisp and tender, about 2 minutes. Drain pineapple, reserve 1/4 cup syrup. Combine syrup with all ingredients except bananas and ham slices. Wrap bananas in the ham slices. Arrange in rectangular baking pan. Pour sauce over rolls and bake in 375 degree oven for 15 minutes. Baste occasionally. Serve with hot rice.

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by Sam Hicks



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MESCAHA, OR SAGEBRUSH, is one of the most common aromatic shrubs of the Southwest used for concocting medicinal tea. The tea is bitter and unpalatable if cooked too strong. As an effective antiseptic for bathing wounds, brush tips and leaves are boiled vigorously until the tea is deep green in color. It is especially recommended for washing and healing wire cuts on horses, but when made weak, the tea is taken as a spring tonic by many people in the Southwest and Mexico.

Mescaha, or Sagebrush, grows at elevations of from 2000 to 10,000 feet. Its wood burns hot and it has always been a popular fuel for branding-iron fires. An identifying factor is the snubbed-off end of each leaf, which appears to have been cut with pinkish shears, leaving three rounded points. Slate gray in color, the tips of the brush and leaves are always cooked together and when boiled, turn green.

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FOR SALE: Near Agua Caliente Springs, in Vallejo, 3.88 acres. Good well, and submersible pump. Electricity, septic tank in. Highway S.2 frontage. W. P. Zornes, Agua Caliente Star Route, Julian, Calif. 92036.

400,000,000 ACRES government land available in 25 states, some low as \$1 acre, 1964 report. Send \$1 to National Land, 422T1 Washington Building, Washington, D.C.

• REAL ESTATE

FOR RENT: 3 units approximately 500 square feet each, in Palm Desert's most beautiful building, 73-700 El Paseo. Also 4000 square feet air conditioned factory building on Dillon Road, 4 miles east Desert Hot Springs. Contact: P. K. Nichols, P.O. Box 641, Palm Desert, Calif., or SYcamore 5-2131, Pasadena, collect.

HOMESITE, ASH Meadows, Nevada near California line, 2 1/2 or 5 acres, shallow water, electricity available to property. Iris Slingsby, Box 32, Death Valley Junction, California.

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EXCITING ADVENTURE locating hidden loot, treasure, relics, etc., with powerful, electronic M-Scope locator, lightweight, guaranteed, very easy terms. Send for free booklet, interesting customer reports. Fisher Research, Dept. JY, Palo Alto, Calif.

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FIND LOST or hidden treasures with new transistor metal detector, underwater metal detectors, scintillation counters, etc. Free literature. Gardiner Electronics, Dept. 51, 4729 North 7th Ave., Phoenix, Arizona.

FINEST TRANSISTOR metal locators, \$34.95 to \$275. Find coins, souvenirs, treasure. Informative folder, "Metal Locating Kinks," 25c. IGWTD, Williamsburg, New Mexico.

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GHOST TOWN items: Sun-colored glass, amethyst to royal purple; ghost railroads materials, tickets; limited odd items from camps of the '60s. Write your interest—Box 64-D, Smith, Nevada.

GHOST TOWN Bottle Price Guide, now in second printing. Designed to help the collector evaluate his bottles. Research compiled from dealers in Western states. An interesting guide, nicely illustrated. \$2 prepaid. Wes Bressie, Rt. 1, Box 582-A, Eagle Point, Oregon.

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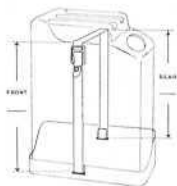
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LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelopes

Nevada Sage at Stake? . . .

To the Editor: It is our understanding that the U.S. Forest Service plans to spray and kill sage brush, pinon, and juniper trees in Nye County, Nevada, so that more grass will grow to feed more cattle. We who love the sage and the trees think it a pity to kill them. There isn't enough moisture in Nevada to grow grass anyway. We hope something can be done to preserve the beauty of the desert.

HAZEL STANTON,
Paradise, California

Editor's Comment: Mr. Ray Downs, representative for Nye County on Nevada's Board of Economic Development, has this to say: "It is true in some areas north of Tonopah, but the acreage involved is so infinitesimal that it is no different than clearing a few acres to plant potatoes. Where there is water and good soil, they are trying to make use of it. For information regarding future plans, you might contact the U. S. Forest Service in Reno."

What's the Road-Shrine? . . .

To the Editor: Along the Colorado River north of Yuma, on the Arizona side, I saw an old sign which read: "The Shrine of Ee-Vee Tau-Ash." Can any DESERT reader help me on that? It was across from the old Fort Yuma site.

E. H. CAMERON,
San Diego, California

Serpent Similarities . . .

To the Editor: Your large serpent pictograph in the August issue may be one of many of this type found around the world. The Bible mentioned the "firy flying serpent," and a Swedish book I translated for the Southwest Museum mentioned similar rock carvings in caves in Sweden. It is somewhat like the reptile-dragon myths of Japan and China. The Aztecs called it *awanya*; the Toltecs named it *quetzal-coatl* and associated it with Venus, the morning star. In our Southland, the symbol is often likened to lightning and called "the lightning snake."

ROY M. YOUNGMAN,
Sunland, California

Reader is Right . . .

To the Editor: I have never seen a ghost town and I doubt that I ever will, but I have a very nostalgic and strong feeling for them. You people who live near them should invoke the aid of your state governments to protect these relics of our American history. Human pack rats who destroy and deface should be prosecuted the full extent of the law.

JUSTIN D. JUSNEY,
Dimondale, Michigan

Ghost Town Chaser . . .

To the Editor: Lambert Florin's September feature on Kingston, New Mexico was interesting to me because I had never before heard that particular anecdote. His accompanying photo is of the old bank building, which in more recent years housed the Post Office. The bell was used to warn townspeople of impending attacks by hostile Indians. It was last used by the Postmaster to announce the arrival of daily mail.

LE BANAH F. WINCHESTER,
Bell Gardens, California

Eastern Artist Digs DESERT . . .

To the Editor: Enclosed is a cartoon which you might get a kick out of. I liked the September issue of DESERT and remarked that, for me, there was more of interest to read in it than in any of the other ten magazines I subscribe to

GARRETT PRICE,
Mystic, Conn.

Editor's Comment: Mr. Price is famous for his hundreds of cover paintings and cartoons published by the **NEW YORKER**. Recently he illustrated a children's book, *No Magic, Thank You*, for Little-Brown and is currently working on two more. The cartoon referred to in his letter appears in this issue of DESERT Magazine. C.P.

Editorial Blunder . . .

To the Editor: In Kenneth Marquiss' lost mine story in the September issue, he wrote that Dr. Susan's map was without compass orientation, yet at the top of the one printed it says "East." Also, if that '51 jeep in the photo is a La Salle, I'll eat it in front of your office!

WINCH PARKER,
Blythe, California

Editor's Comment: We had the right idea; just the wrong photo. Below is the La Salle that should have gone with the caption. Also the word "East" was misinterpreted by our artist. It should have read "easy." C.P.

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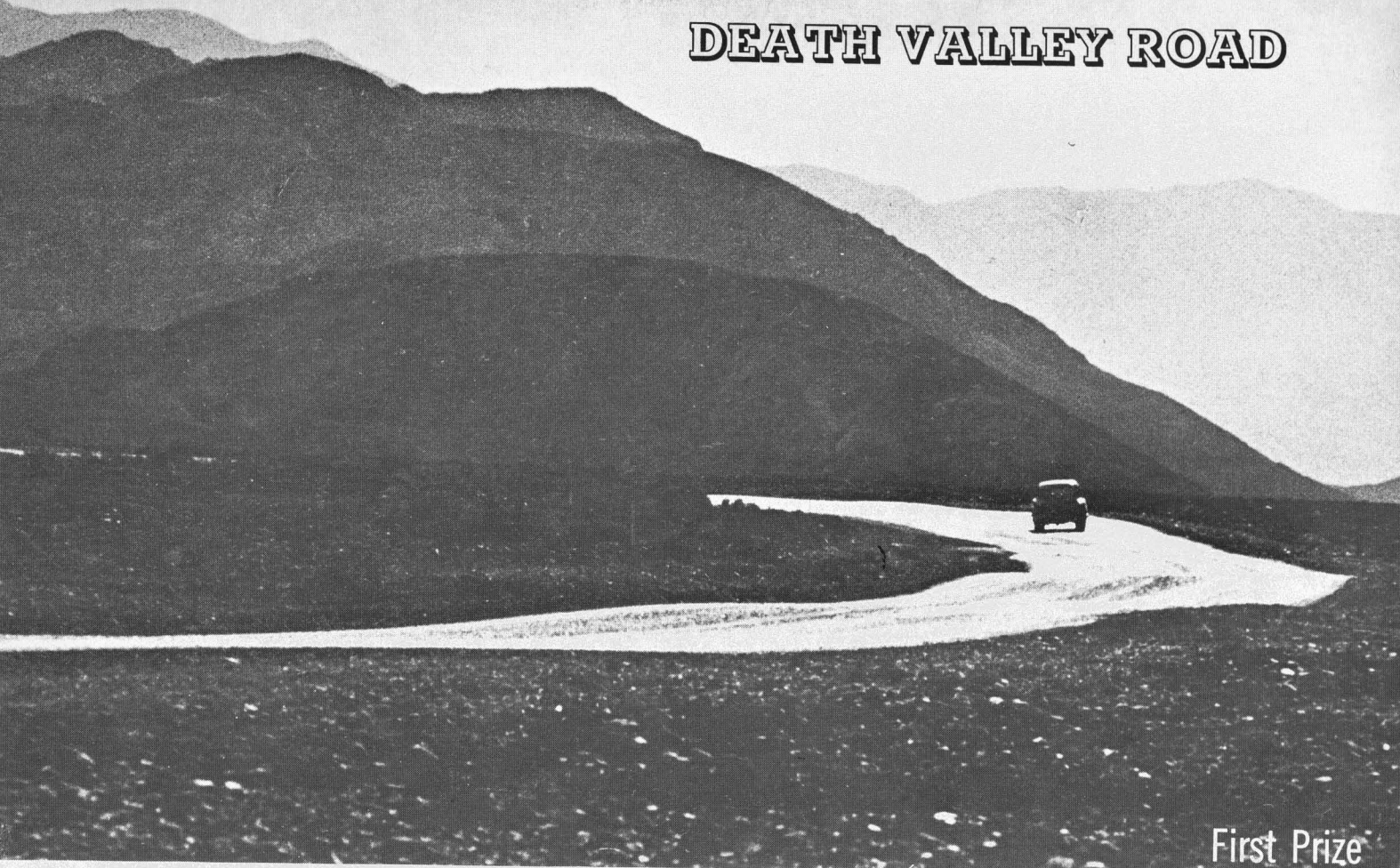
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DEATH VALLEY ROAD



First Prize



Second Prize

Although today a safe winter vacation area, during the 1800's untold numbers of pioneers seeking gold and a new life in California perished crossing the burning sands of Death Valley. Tom Myers, Sacramento, Calif., captures the mood of Death Valley in this contrast study. DATA: Alpa with 135mm (3 power) lens, polaroid filter, Tri-X film, early morning light, 1/500 at f11.

NOVEMBER PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Curiosity overcame fear so Alma Ready, of Tuscon, Arizona, could photograph these two young round-tail ground squirrels near Oracle Junction, Arizona. Although they emerged because of the noise of a truck motor, we think the best caption is "Now where is the postman with our DESERT Magazine?" DATA: Mamiya C-3, Mamiya-Sekor 80mm lens, Y-2 filter, Verichrome Pan, 1/250th at f16, three feet away.



PHOTO CONTEST RULES

1—Prints for monthly contests must be black and white, 5x7 or larger, printed on glossy paper.

2—Each photograph submitted should be fully labeled as to subject, time and place. Also technical data: camera, shutter speed, hour of day, etc.

3—PRINTS WILL BE RETURNED ONLY WHEN RETURN POSTAGE IS ENCLOSED.

4—All entries must be in the Desert

Magazine office by the 20th of the contest month.

5—Contests are open to both amateur and professional photographers.

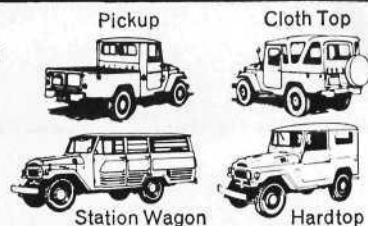
6—FIRST PRIZE will be \$15; SECOND PRIZE, 8. For non-winning pictures accepted for publication \$3 each will be paid. Although not part of the contest, Desert is also interest in viewing 4x5 color transparencies for possible front cover use. We pay \$25 per transparency.

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